

Ban TV junk food ads until 21:00, say campaigners

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Children are being exposed to TV adverts promoting unhealthy food which should be banned during primetime family viewing, says a campaign group.

Action on Junk Food Marketing analysed 750 adverts shown during the X Factor on ITV and the Simpsons and Hollyoaks on Channel 4 over 20 hours.

It found one in 10 promoted fast food restaurants, confectionery or supermarket 'junk food'.

But the government said advertising was not to blame for childhood obesity.

The analysis, which was carried out by researchers at the University of Liverpool, found that unhealthy food items accounted for 11% of all adverts and around half of all food adverts.

They said the most frequently shown adverts for unhealthy food products came from supermarkets such as Aldi and Morrisons, followed by fast food chains such as Dominos and Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC).

Chocolate manufacturers like Lindt and Cadbury and brands such as Clover and Flora Buttery were also included on the "unhealthy" ads list.

The researchers looked at adverts shown during 10 hours of X Factor programmes and another 10 hours of early evening Channel 4 programmes during the run-up to Christmas 2013.

The campaign group Action on Junk Food Marketing, whose members include the Children's Food Campaign and the British Heart Foundation, said children's TV viewing peaks around 20:00 but laws to protect children from targeted advertising only cover children's programmes, which tend to be broadcast earlier in the day.

Simon Gillespie, chief executive of the British Heart Foundation, said: "Parents don't expect their children to be bombarded with ads for unhealthy food during primetime TV, but that's exactly what happens.[...]"