Sources of Health Information

# Where do we go for information?

There are different places we go to for good information on health. What we want to do is get the right information for us.

# Expert advice

Look for information from a Government agency, research organisation, not-for-profit organisation or university.

If you want to make changes to what you eat it is best to get advice suited to you. Your doctor may discuss this with you or refer you to an Accredited Practicing Dietitian (APD). APDs are qualified to give evidence-based nutrition advice.

# Friends and family

People often like to get information from people they trust. This is one reason friends and family are a main source of health information. 84% of Tasmanian young people say they go to a friend for help; 78% go to a parent or carer.[[1]](#endnote-1)

It is important to remember friends and family can be misled too. Just because they think something is true doesn’t mean it is. If a friend or family member gives you advice, check if the experts agree.

If a friend or family member has found something that works for them, it doesn’t mean you will have the same experience. It can be helpful to ask why they are feeling ‘better’. There’s lots of things that contribute to us feeling healthier and more positive. You might like to think about the following:

* Have they replaced a lot of ‘sometimes’ foods with ‘everyday’ foods?
* Are they more active?
* Are they getting more sleep?

Some food choices other people make can be harmful or dangerous. There might be times it is necessary to speak up and encourage them to get support with their eating. If you decide not to follow their advice, do it respectfully.

# Food Advertising

Whether you are aware of it or not, food advertising is everywhere. Food advertising often promotes foods that are not part of the five food groups. These are ‘sometimes’ foods. Food advertising can affect what we choose to eat which effects our health.

Advertising aims to:

* make you aware of a brand
* convince you to choose that product over any other, and
* build loyalty to the brand.

Some advertisements are obvious like those on TV, radio, websites, magazines or on the sides of buses. This type of advertising wants to capture our interest and is often colourful, attractive or funny.

Other types of advertising may be so subtle you do not notice its influence. Examples of this include:

* product placement on movies or TV shows
* food companies sponsoring sports teams
* toys with brand logos on them or toy versions of food products
* social media influencers featuring products on their feed and making claims about them
* paid ‘opinion’ articles online, in magazines or in newspapers
* sponsored social media posts.

Learn to spot food advertising and be critical of its messages.

Some foods are ‘sold’ as ‘diet’ foods. Be cautious of advertising that tries to sell you a particular body shape or a ‘miracle’ benefit’. This type of advertising uses emotive language. That means using words to cause an emotional reaction to convince you to use the products. This can prey on insecurities and make you feel like you are missing out. An example of emotive language is: *“I couldn’t believe how good this one small change made me feel – it’s so simple and has changed my life!”*

Advertising uses all sorts of ways to attract attention. It’s good to develop a critical eye and remember that images may be altered using Photoshop, different angles or lighting.

1. Carlisle, E., Fildes, J., Hall, S., Hicking, V., Perrens, B. and Plummer, J. 2018, Youth Survey Report 2018, Mission Australia [↑](#endnote-ref-1)