

## Protect us! Campaign Backgrounder

### Background

- 1 in 5 adult Barbadians has diabetes.<sup>1</sup>
- 31% of children are overweight/obese.<sup>2</sup>
- 66% of adults are overweight, and 33% obese.<sup>3</sup>
- 80% of all deaths in Barbados are caused by non-communicable diseases (NCDs).<sup>4,5</sup>
- Food beverage and restaurant companies globally spend almost USD\$14 billion a year on advertising, with more than 80% promoting fast food, sugary drinks, candy and unhealthy snacks<sup>6</sup>
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, overweight is a serious public health problem that affects more than 4 million children under 5 years and almost 50 million children and adolescents between 5 and 19 years<sup>7</sup>
- The WHO recommends a comprehensive approach to achieve the desired impact of address childhood obesity which includes restricting all forms of food marketing to eliminate children's exposure<sup>8</sup>
- Within the Food Services Environment Policy Statement, it is outlined that "Food and beverage marketing activities are prohibited in or around all schools and tertiary level educational institutions and in their vicinity." (p.34).<sup>9</sup>
- Long-term exposure to food marketing influences children's thoughts and behaviours, in particular, their attitudes, preferences and consumption of unhealthy food products.<sup>10</sup>

### Campaign Overview

The "Protect Us! It's time to ban marketing of unhealthy foods and drinks in schools" campaign calls for policy makers to enforce the restriction of marketing unhealthy food and drinks to children in schools. It reinforces the fact that unhealthy foods and drinks have been removed from the school environment since the implementation of the 2023 Barbados School Nutrition Policy, however marketing continues.

The primary campaign video uses a school-aged girl, "Rosie" who questions the presence of such marketing activities amidst the steps taken to create a healthier school environment. It highlights sponsorship of sporting activities and branded stationery which have been observed as key marketing initiatives. A final call is made for children to be protected in schools, underscoring that 31% of children in Barbados are overweight/obese predisposing them to Non-Communicable Diseases.

### Campaign Key Messages

- 31% of children are overweight/obese placing them at risk for developing noncommunicable diseases as adults such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.
- Marketing activities for unhealthy ultra-processed food products continue to be prominent in schools, even though the restriction of marketing is outlined within the Food Services Environment statement of the National School Nutrition Policy (p.34)
- Food and drinks marketing is a child's rights concern, as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child speaking to their rights to health, adequate and nutritious food, privacy and freedom from exploitation.
- By marketing ultra-processed food products high in saturated fats, *trans*-fatty acids, free sugars or salt, food business actors undermine children's access to adequate food and healthy diets.

### Ways to Support the Campaign

1. Find out more at <https://www.hsfbarbados.org/>

2. Reduce consumption of unhealthy foods.
3. Exercise your right to know what's in your food.
4. Link your website to from @hsfbarbados social media pages.
5. Publish the campaign materials on your website and social media pages.
6. Raise awareness and support the campaign regularly through your social media posts by:
  - a. Using the hashtags: #StopUnhealthyMarketing #ProtectOurChildren #HealthySchools #RightToKnow #HealthyChoices #HealthBarbados
  - b. Like, comment, share or repost messages: <https://www.hsfbarbados.org/>

- 
1. Ministry of Health, Barbados. The Barbados Health of the Nation Survey: Core Findings 2015. 2016. [http://www.archive.healthycaribbean.org/newsletters/aug-2015/CDRC\\_HealthOfTheNationSurvey.pdf](http://www.archive.healthycaribbean.org/newsletters/aug-2015/CDRC_HealthOfTheNationSurvey.pdf)
  2. St. John, Hall, Knight, Hinds, Fernandez, Gaskin. Non-communicable Diseases in a Group of Primary School Children in Barbados 2010
  3. Ministry of Health, Barbados. The Barbados Health of the Nation Survey: Core Findings 2015. 2016. [http://www.archive.healthycaribbean.org/newsletters/aug-2015/CDRC\\_HealthOfTheNationSurvey.pdf](http://www.archive.healthycaribbean.org/newsletters/aug-2015/CDRC_HealthOfTheNationSurvey.pdf)
  4. World Health Organization (WHO). Non-communicable Diseases (NCD) Country Profiles. 2018. [https://www.who.int/nmh/countries/2018/jam\\_en.pdf](https://www.who.int/nmh/countries/2018/jam_en.pdf)
  5. World Health Organization (WHO). Non-communicable Diseases Country Profile. 2018. [https://www.who.int/nmh/countries/brb\\_en.pdf?ua=1](https://www.who.int/nmh/countries/brb_en.pdf?ua=1)
  6. State of Childhood Obesity. Food marketing to children. <https://stateofchildhoodobesity.org/policy-topic/food-marketing-to-children/>
  7. UNICEF. Childhood Obesity on the Rise (2016). <https://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/reports/childhood-overweight-rise>
  8. UNICEF, WHO. Taking action to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing: A child's rights based approach (2023). <https://www.unicef.org/media/142621/file/UNICEF-WHO%20Toolkit%20to%20Protect%20Children%20from%20the%20Harmful%20Impact%20of%20Food%20Marketing.pdf>
  9. Government of Barbados. National School Nutrition Policy (2023). <https://mrd.gov.bb/attachments/National%20School%20Nutrition%20Policy-Barbados%20Sept%2019,%202022.pdf>
  10. Smith, Kelly, Yeatman, Boyland. Food Marketing Influences Children's Attitudes, Preferences and Consumption: A systematic critical review (2019). <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6520952/>