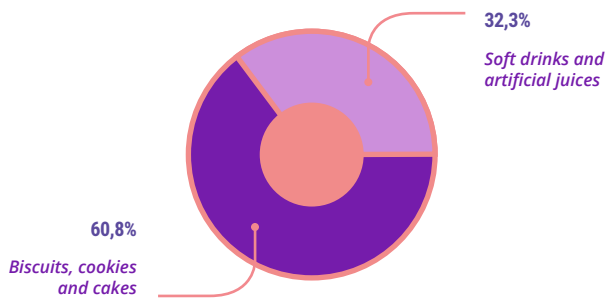


UNDERSTANDING THE CHILDREN'S FOOD PREFERENCES

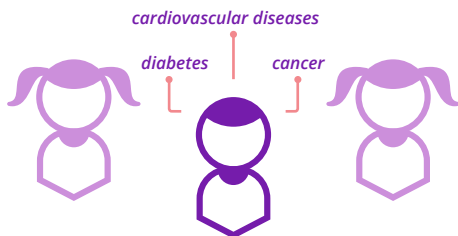
What children eat...

Has impacts on their health. Researches^{1,2} carried out in Brazil, show that the ultra-processed products consumption begins increasingly earlier.

FOOD CONSUMPTION AMONG CHILDREN UNDER TWO YEARS OLD

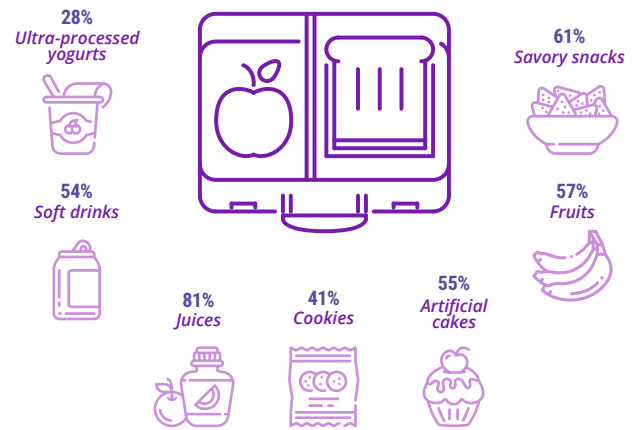


The Family Budgets Survey (FBS) of 2008-2009 shows that one out of three children in the 5 / 9-year-old age bracket are overweight. Due to this situation, that group can develop a number of life-long non-communicable chronic diseases.



Nourishing preferences among children

Idec, in partnership with UNICEF³, developed a qualitative research with 69 7/12-year-old children from different socioeconomic levels, from urban areas of São Paulo municipality and found out what children like to eat in school:



For those children from lower social classes, fruits come in fourth place in their preference list (47%). Industrialized cakes and cookies are the favorite options.

The survey data prove that the food advertising has a meaningful impact on the family's decision about what they are going to consume.

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HOW WOULD THE “IDEAL” PACKAGE OF A PRODUCT BE, IN THE CHILDREN’S OPINION

Qualities related to the eating pleasure (for example, “it is sweet”, “it has filling”, “it is delicious”, “it is crispy”) or to the substance sensation (“it fills the stomach”) are more important to children than the notion that the food is healthful.

For the children, what attracts their attention at the time to choose a product is a package that:

- The food image
- Vibrant and attractive colors
- Information about the flavor
- The product’s indulgent characteristics
- Character’s presence
- Novelties and promotions
- Details about the manufacture process



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WHAT THE PARENTS THINK

Among the parents and the caretakers of the children who have attended the research, 60% declared that the children do not consume or seldom consume products with sweetener. However, they probably do not know the food products composition.

- 71% of them declared that put crackers and cookies in the children’s lunch boxes;
- 58% cakes and biscuits;
- 42% snacks;
- 90% Industrialized juices;
- 57% dairy drinks and chocolate milk.

Most of the listed products normally contain sweetener

Reading the labels

The research results show that:

- 45% of parents and caretakers have declared that they do not have the habit to check the labels of those products that they consume, and 10% of them never check;
- 82% agree with the statement that the visual elements that are present on the food packages, for example, colors, allegations and images, have an influence on the children’s food choice.

Researches⁴ show that this happens because people feel that they have “familiarity with the product” and by the “difficulty to read the labels” (the letters are very small and hidden; the information is confusing and generally presented in technical language).

What can be done

- Regulation of the abusive advertising that is directed at children.
- Implantation of clear nutritional information on the labels of packaged food.

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