EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR MEDIA LITERACY IN HEALTHIER FOOD CHOICES

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Health educators can benefit from creating teaching lessons on media literacy among students in choosing nutritional foods. The influence of the media especially in television ads tend to misguide consumers in choosing the right foods for better nutrition.

Advertisement is a huge industry and is very influential. Just seeing teen stars eating junk foods and sugary drinks can increase the likelihood for the adolescent and children viewers to buy the food and drinks to try for themselves. A popular actor can drink beer or smoke in an advertisement and young teen boys will think it is cool and imitate the actor by drinking the same beer and smoke the same cigarette.

This is how influential advertisements are. Adolescents and children are vulnerable and malleable and anything they see, they tend to imitate especially if it looks cool to them. It is essential for adults who guide them like their parents and teachers to help them make sound critical judgments and analysis of essentially deciding on healthy choices.

At their age, their poor health decisions can be masked by the peak of their young age. This means the poor health choices cannot be obviously seen at their age now but will have long term effects on their health in the future sooner or later.

As health educators, sharing innovative teaching techniques in health such as mobile health applications and media streaming can allure students to keep up with the hype. Most importantly, help and teach students to gain media literacy for them to gain analytical skills in deconstructing advertisements. Commercial journaling homework and in-class group advertisement analysis are some exercises you can give them.
The objective is to help students identify media influence on food consumption and nutritional choices. Mindless eating is the culprit shown in watching media. When students learn to become more analytical and understand better what impacts their food choices, they may be more adept into making healthier choices. Health educators can provide media for mindful eating, and become role models for these students as well.

References: