

Deliverable D7.5:

Report: Recommendations and implications for food product development, marketing and social marketing

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BACKGROUND

The alarming rates of childhood obesity call for effective actions promoting healthy eating in the family food environment. Mix-method research has shown that social marketing strategies have the potential to influence voluntary lifestyle behaviours. Most compelling evidence points that effective nutrition campaigns should gather theory-based evidence on the wants and needs of target audiences, and on the personal benefits expected in relation to eating healthily.

KEY FINDINGS

Cross-country investigation shed light on parental barriers for healthy eating in the transition to parenthood. The analysis revealed that parenthood is perceived to affect food choices differently according to four different stages in the transition to becoming a parent: 1) pregnancy, 2) first months with the baby, 3) complementary feeding and 4) child shares family meals. We recommend social marketing strategies and product development options to facilitate healthy eating considering parental wants and needs in the four phases.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data from diverse methods and sources indicated that social marketing strategies should involve all family members. Especially for fathers, the development of cooking skills is crucial to optimize meals' preparation time and acceptance of healthful meals. Child's unwillingness to try new foods was also pointed out as a constraint for families' healthier eating. Therefore,

actions tackling father's food skills and both father's and child's food aversions would benefit the entire family, potentially decreasing maternal burden with food-related activities.

With regard to the food market role, there might be a need for a greater assortment of healthy convenience foods and services to support new families; especially during the busiest times, when cooking healthy, elaborated meals is not an option (as for example, the first weeks/months with the baby). Food product development might focus on healthy (low-sugar) foods and beverages with ingredients appealing to energy boost. The report summarizes the recommendations considering the phases in the transition to parenthood.