

SAN FRANCISCO, USA: HEALTHY FOOD INCENTIVES ORDINANCE

#ordinance #restaurants #takeaways #marketing #highfatsugarsalt #northamerica #overweightobesity

THE ACTION AND ITS AIMS: San Francisco introduced the Healthy Food Incentives Ordinance (Art. 8 Section 471 of San Francisco Health Code) that banned restaurants and takeaways from offering free toys and other items with children's meals, unless the meals meet nutritional standards on total calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fats, sodium, and minimal fruit and vegetable content. The aim was to prevent food businesses from making unhealthy foods more attractive to children.

WHEN IT WAS INTRODUCED: The ordinance was introduced in 2011.

WHY IT WAS NEEDED: It was deemed necessary in light of the high rates of child obesity in San Francisco. Children's menus in restaurants and takeaways tend to contain items like burgers, chicken nuggets, macaroni and cheese, fries and soft drinks, and often exceed recommended calorie intake. Free gifts make these options more attractive to children.

WHO INITIATED IT, WHO IS INVOLVED: The action was adopted by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. The lead implementing entities are the city's Department of Public Health and the Department of Environment.

IMPACTS TO DATE: An impact study looking at practices of two global restaurant chains following the ordinance found that both implemented some menu changes, particularly regarding side dishes. However, they found a loophole and continued to offer toys with unhealthy meal purchases for an additional USD.10, meaning they were no-longer free; 88% of customers chose to buy the toys.



San Francisco (USA), Shutterstock/Canadastock

MORE INFORMATION:

- Charter: San Francisco's ordinance - Setting Nutritional Standards for Restaurant Food Sold Accompanied by Toys or other Youth Focused Incentive Items
http://www.sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/committees/materials/lu092710_101096.pdf
- Article: Impact of San Francisco's Toy Ordinance on Restaurants and Children's Food Purchases, 2011–2012, July 2014
https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2014/14_0026.htm

Citation: This case study version is from the Menu of Actions (2019). Suggested citation: Halliday, J., Platenkamp, L., Nicolarea, Y. (2019) A menu of actions to shape urban food environments for improved nutrition, GAIN, MUFPP and RUAF.