

NUTRIGRAM

January 2007

Commercial Count

Did you know that average kid in the United States watches about 3-5 hours of TV per day? This is quite a bit of TV, and as we know, watching a lot of TV means watching a lot of commercials. In fact, the average kid from ages 6 to 11 sees about 40,000 advertisements each year! What do you think those commercials are for? Toys? Video games? Would it surprise you that many of those commercials are for food?

What Does this Mean?

Most of those food advertisements aimed at kids your age are for fast foods, sweets and snacks, such as soda, candy and sugary cereals. These ads use a variety of techniques to get and hold kids' attention such as:

- ▶ Linking cartoon and movie characters to these foods and to fast-food meals.
- ▶ Using celebrities and athletes to support these foods.
- ▶ Encouraging kids to purchase these foods to get a prize or play a game on the Internet.

It can also be confusing that these advertisements sometimes make claims about the food being healthy. It is important to remember that while one small part of the food being advertised may meet a nutritional requirement or recommendation, this doesn't mean that the food is healthy overall. Plus, you already know that you can meet your nutritional recommendations and get all of your vitamins and minerals from eating lots of different healthy foods!

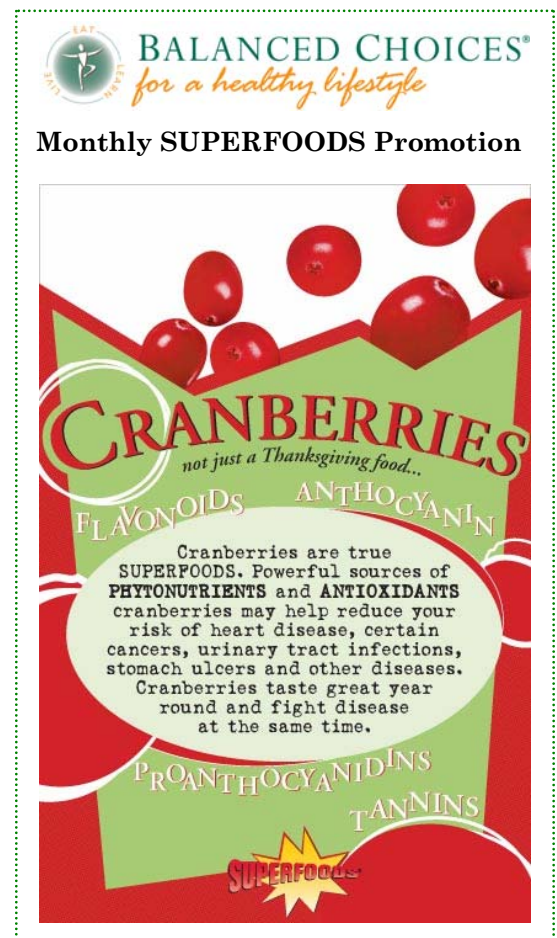
What Can You Do?

Always think! 3 important questions to ask yourself:

- ▶ Who created this message?
- ▶ What creative techniques are used to get my attention?
- ▶ Why is this message being sent?

Also, keep in mind that food advertising is not just on television. Food messages are aimed at kids on billboards, on the Internet, in vending machines, and are even sometimes on school supplies or classroom supplies.

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