Main findings

Campaign awareness was extremely strong with high levels of recall on the creative elements.

Most recent TV ad recall was at 69% which is 9% above the industry norm

6% increase in awareness levels among parents that excess weight in childhood is associated with poor health in later life

7% increase in awareness and openness among parents/guardians to discuss the issue if need with their children

There is clear evidence that the campaign has been effective in both behavioural and attitudinal change.

Almost one in five claimed they have thought about changes to reduce their child’s portion. There was an increase in attempts by parents to reduce portion sizes. An increase from 2013 12% to 2014 16%

3 in 10 also claimed to have stopped pressuring their child to eat everything that they are served

6 in 10 parents who have tried to reduce portion size say that efforts have been successful

The consumption of fizzy drinks once a day or more than once a day has dropped from 2013 45% to 2014 40%

The research indicated a significant increase in the consumption of water at mealtimes from 2013 31% to 2014 38%

There was a significant increase in children getting an hour exercise a day from 2013 59% to 2014 65%

Attempts at increasing exercise have been successful with 8 out of 10 parents agreeing that their efforts have worked.

Just over 1 in 4 parents claim to give their child a food treat at least once a day. This has significantly reduced since the launch of the campaign decreasing from 2013 33% to 2014 24%

Similar to the benchmark survey GP and health professionals continue to play a role in helping parents feel more comfortable in talking to their child
**Background**

Tackling childhood obesity is a public health priority, with 1 in 4 children across the island of Ireland now carrying excess weight. As part of the response in 2013 safefood, the Health Service Executive and Healthy Ireland launched a strategic, integrated public health campaign to raise awareness of the issue among parents, and to support positive changes and choices within families.

**Campaign objectives**

- **To communicate practical solutions that parents can adopt in order to tackle the everyday habits that are associated with excess weight in childhood**
- **To maintain awareness among parents of the health challenges posed by excess weight in childhood, the negative impact this can have on the quality of life, and the importance of tackling this for the long-term**

**Target audience**

- **Primary**
  - Parents and guardians of children aged between 2 to 12
- **Secondary**
  - Family and friends and key influencers

**Campaign messages**

The campaign focused on six core actions for parents to take on in their family:

- Portion sizes
- Replacing sugary drinks with water
- Managing treat foods
- Reducing screen-time
- Increasing physical activity
- Encouraging more sleep

**Campaign activities**

October 2013–September 2014

- **TV**
  - 5 x 40” ad
- **Radio**
  - 5 x 30” ad
- **Outdoor**
  - Outdoor posters and trolley handles
- **Website**
  - Practical tips, recipes and expert videos
- **Digital**
  - Engagement on Facebook likes up 45% Twitter followers up 160%
- **Publications**
  - 250,000 booklets distributed through crèches and GP surgeries

**Research methodology**

Pre (2013) post (2014) campaign survey conducted (by Millward Brown) using 40 sampling points with 567 respondents (face to face)

**Partners**

We are delighted with the results of year one of the campaign. We would like to acknowledge and thank our partners Bodywhys, Early Childhood Ireland, Get Ireland Active, Irish Cancer Society, Irish College of General Practitioners, Irish Nutrition & Dietetic Institute, and Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists for their continued support. We look forward to building on the progress that has been achieved to date.

**For more information on the campaign or to find out how you can get involved contact Andrew Castles**

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