

**Children and
food advertising effects:
When are they old
enough to resist?**

Jennifer L. Harris
October 22, 2008

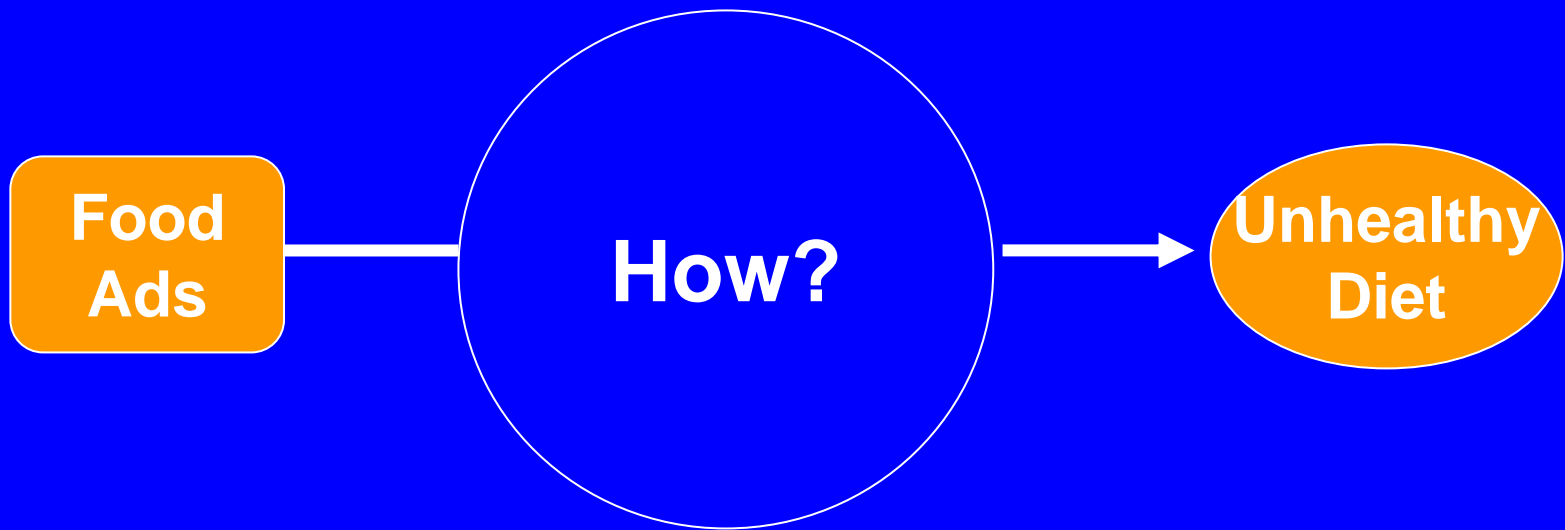
Food advertising and youth: Consumer information or psychological manipulation?

Jennifer L. Harris
December 15, 2008

“Food marketing works” (IOM, 2006)

- Brand recall
- Brand preferences
- Requests to parents

But how does it work?



**Implications for effective solutions
and public policy**

Outline of discussion

- Psychology of advertising effects
 - Intended effects
 - “Side effects”
- Developmental differences
- Potential solutions

Food advertising effects

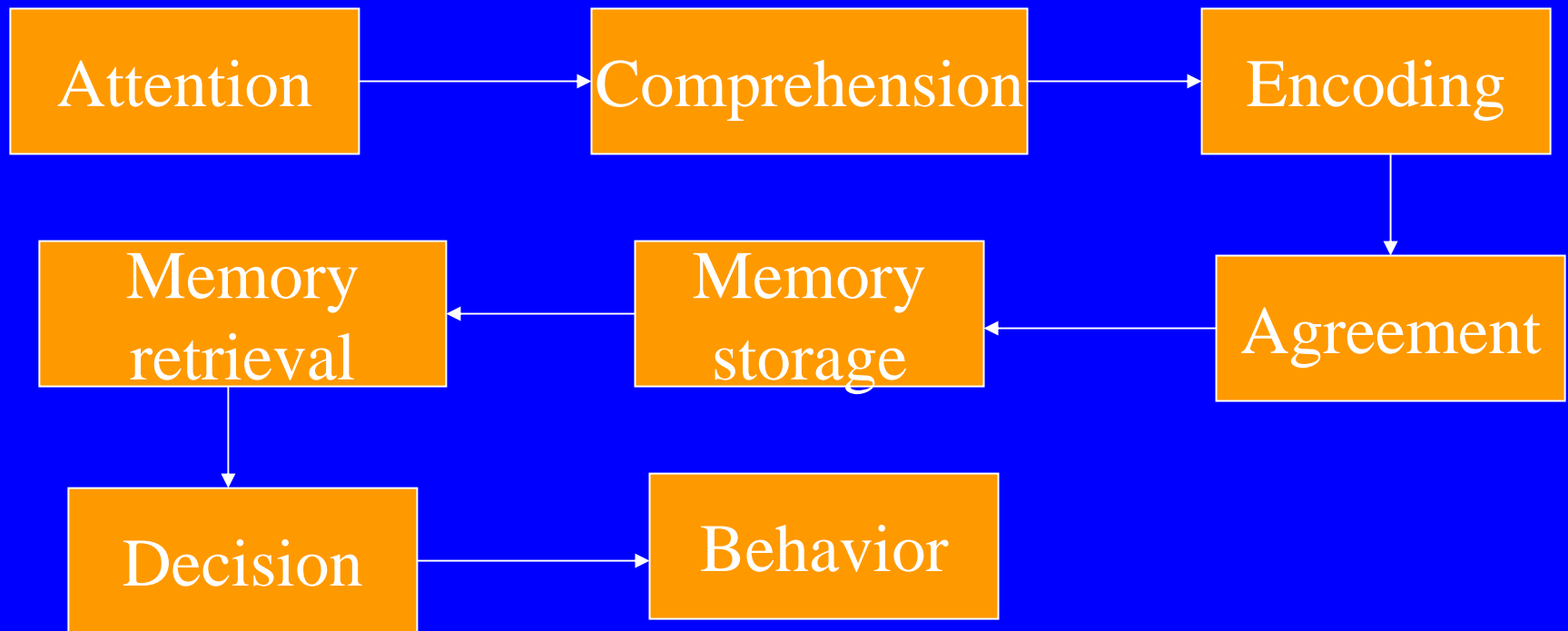
Most existing research is based on an information processing model



Source: IOM, 2006

Information processing

Serial approach to persuasion (McGuire, 1976)



Current advertising theory

Effects occur “Under-the-radar”

- Classical conditioning (positive affect)
- Mere exposure (Zajonc et al.)
- Self-identity
- Brand representations (Keller, 2003)
 - Core motivations
 - Popular events, characters, celebrities
 - Purchase and consumption occasions

Brand representations

Attitudes: “object-evaluation associations in memory” (Fazio, 1986)



Current advertising theory

More recent marketing literature

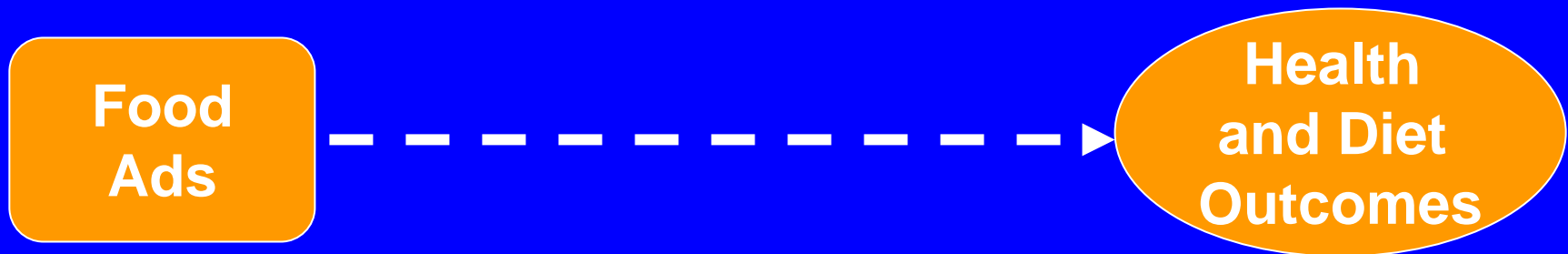
- Framing/expectancy effects on product experience
- Priming effects

Priming effects

Subtle cues in the environment
(primes)

→ Automatic effects on behavior,
outside of conscious awareness

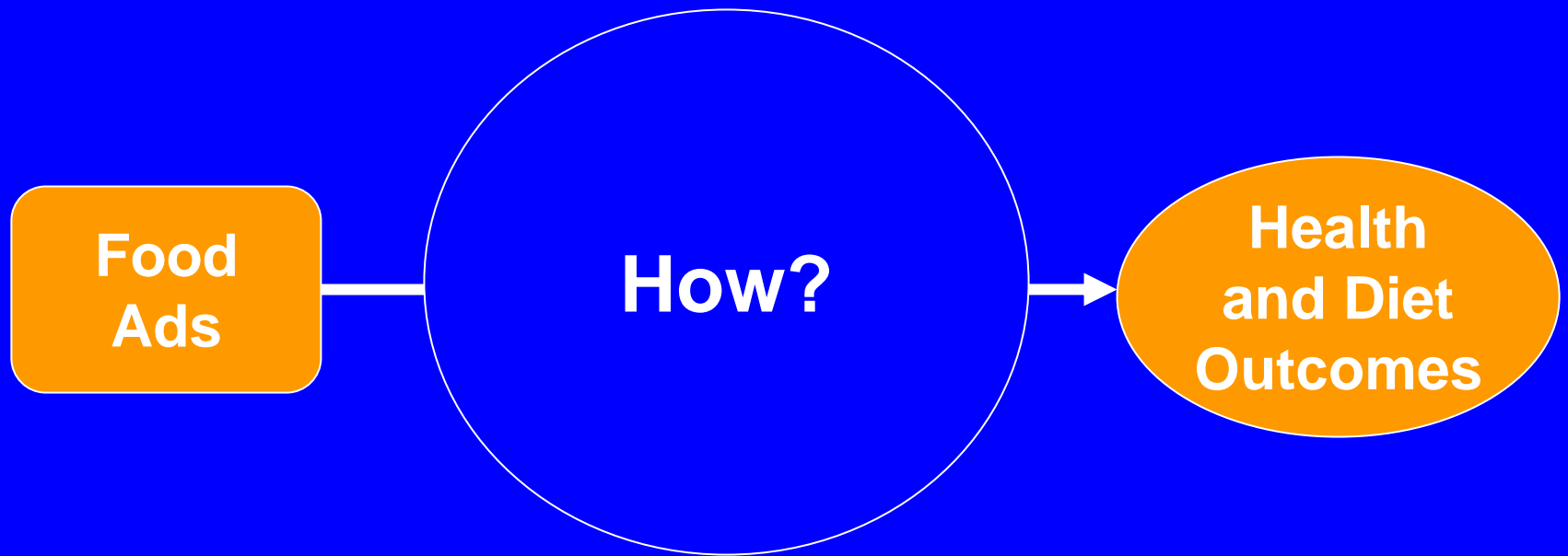
Potential side effects



- Correlational evidence
- Alternative explanations

Sources: IOM, 2006; Hastings et al., 2003

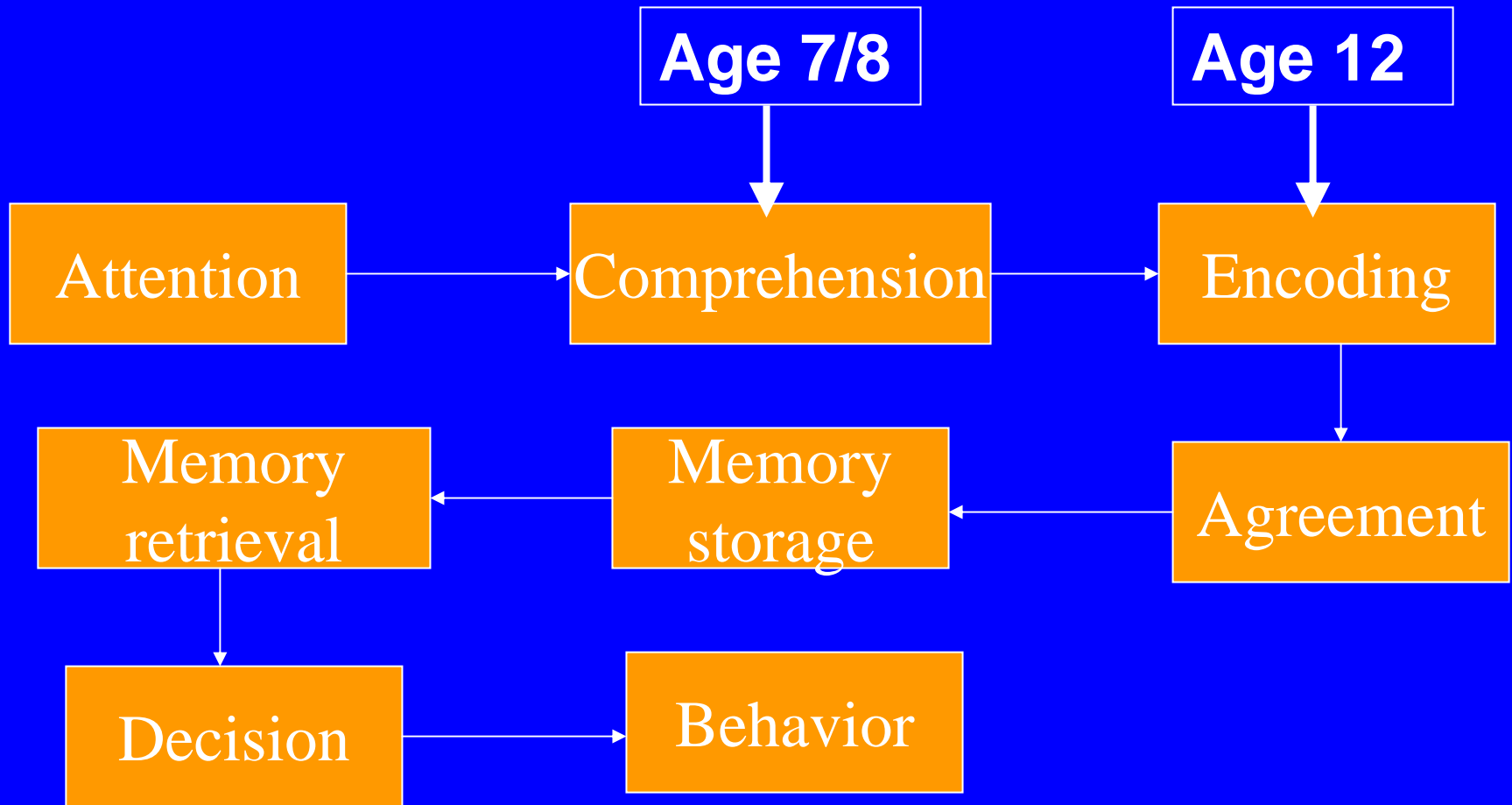
Research question



Potential mechanisms

- Category effects
- Models for social learning
 - Rewards and consequences
 - Social norms
- Priming effects
 - Automatic consumption
 - Taste perceptions
 - Consumption and health-related goals

When do children understand?



Are adolescents more susceptible?

According to alcohol and tobacco literature,

Adolescents are:

- Less able to inhibit impulsive behavior and delay for longer-term rewards
- More susceptible to peer influence and image advertising
- More vulnerable to addiction

Potential solutions

How to defend against “under-the-radar” advertising effects?

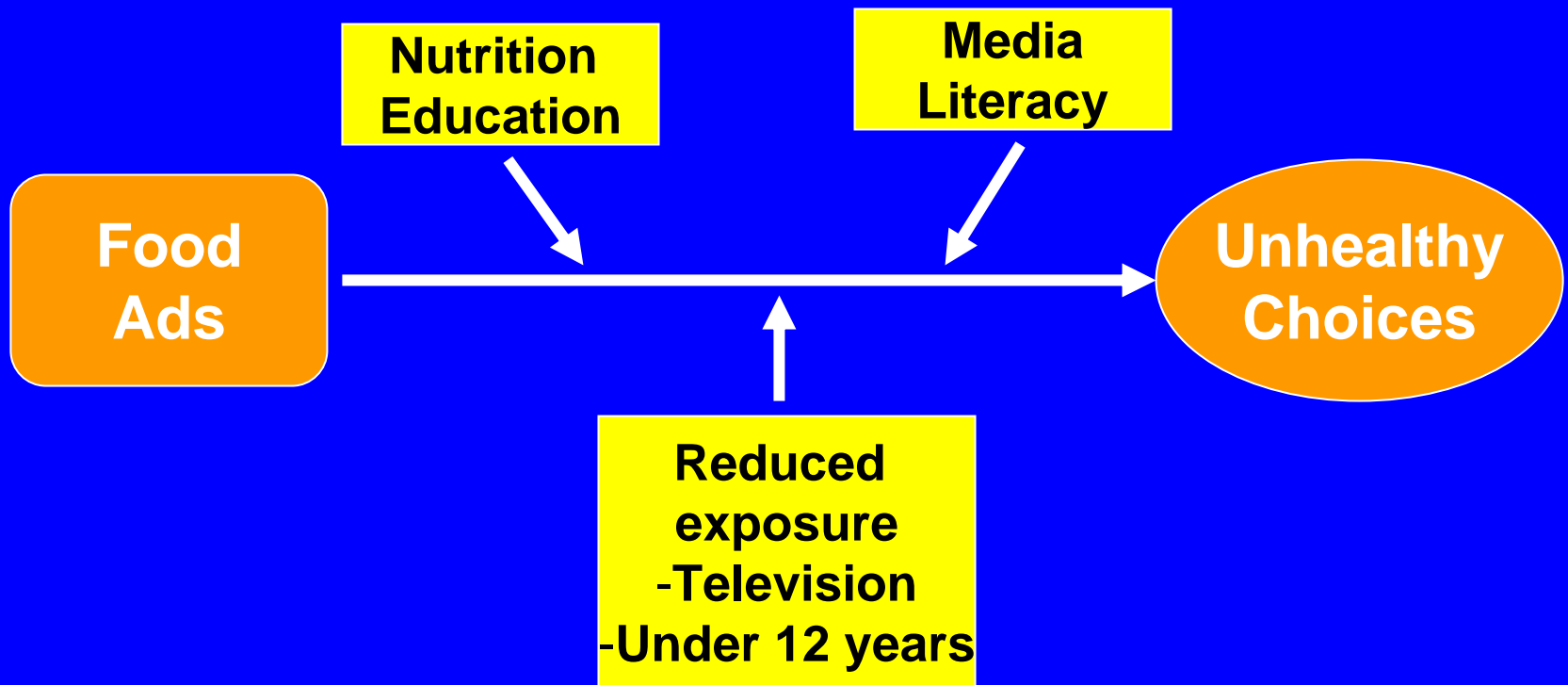
- It’s very difficult
- Automatic acceptance (Gilbert, 1993)
- Mindless processing (Chanowitz & Langer, 1981)

Teaching advertising defenses

Nonconscious mental contamination
(Wilson & Brekke, 1994)

- Awareness
- Understanding
- Motivation
- Ability

Proposed solutions



What about?

- Adolescents and adults
- Other forms of advertising
 - Product placements
 - Sponsorships, co-branding, licensing
 - Internet

What is the policy question?

At what age can children defend
against advertising effects?

OR

At what age are we no longer
obligated to protect youth from
unhealthy advertising influence?

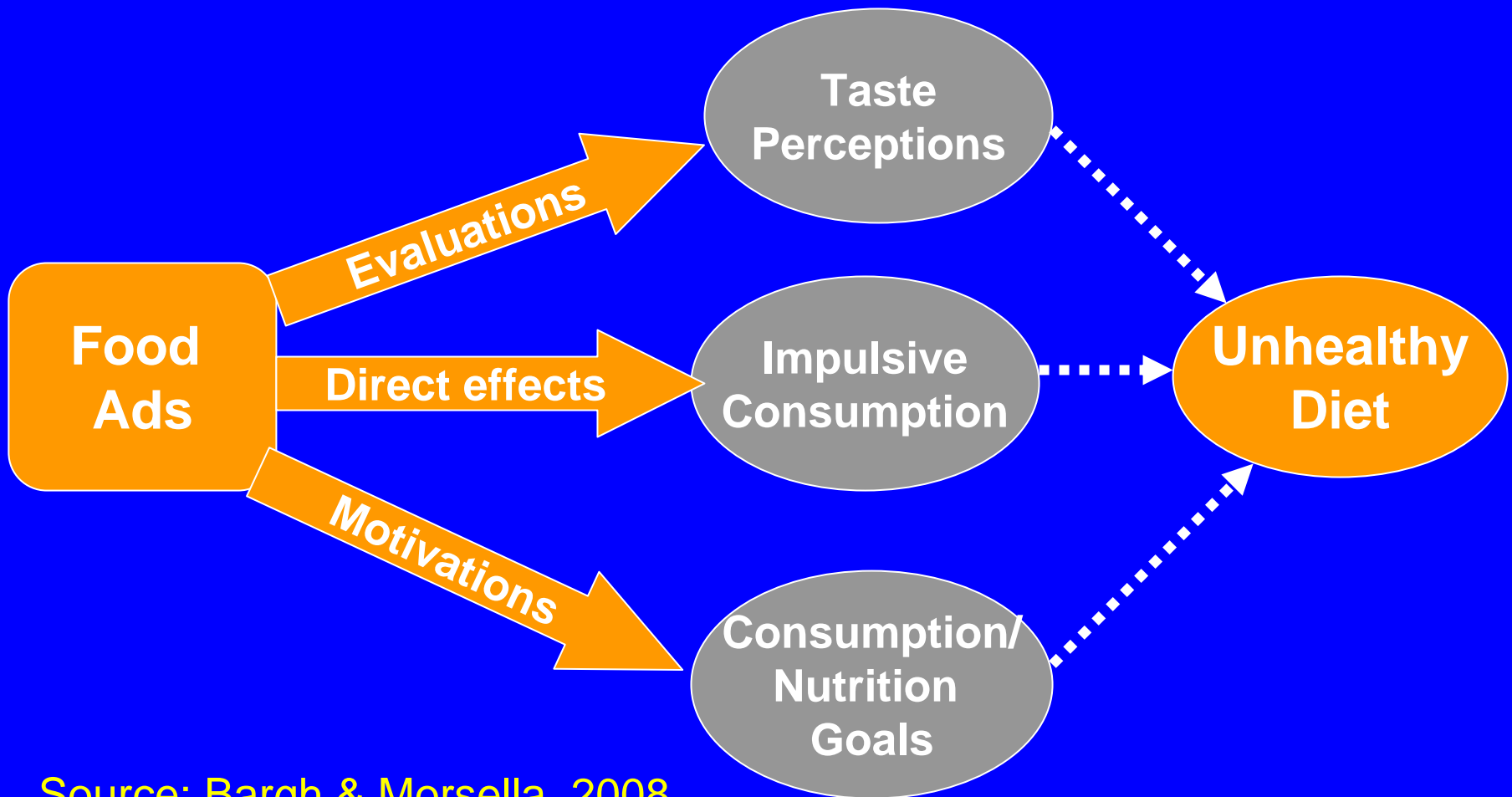
Thank you!



www.yaleruddcenter.org



Priming obesity

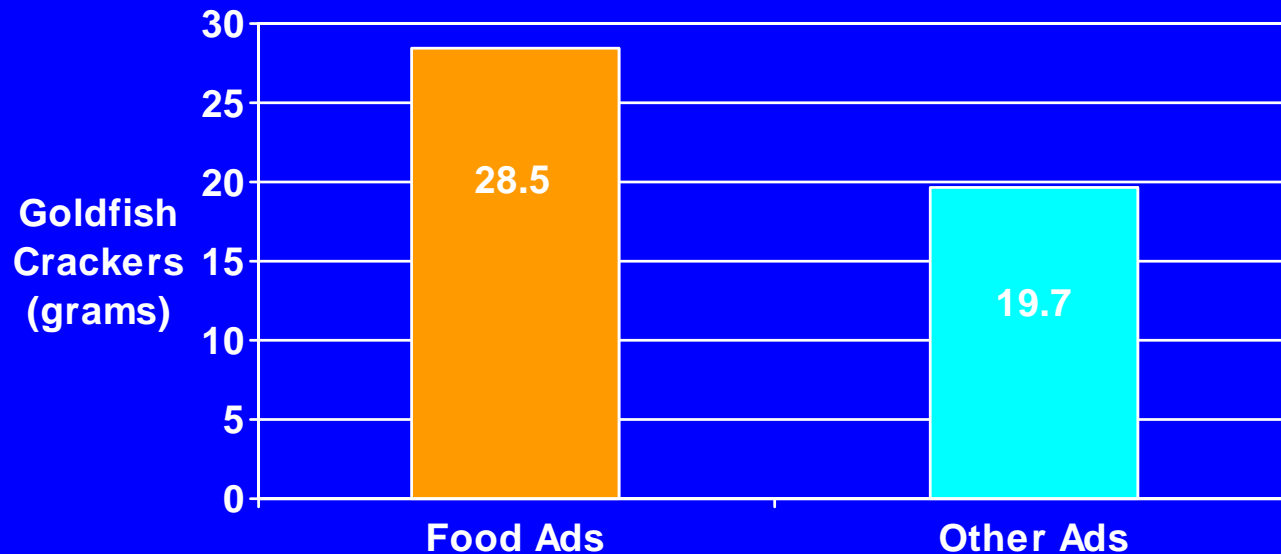


Source: Bargh & Morsella, 2008

Children and food ads

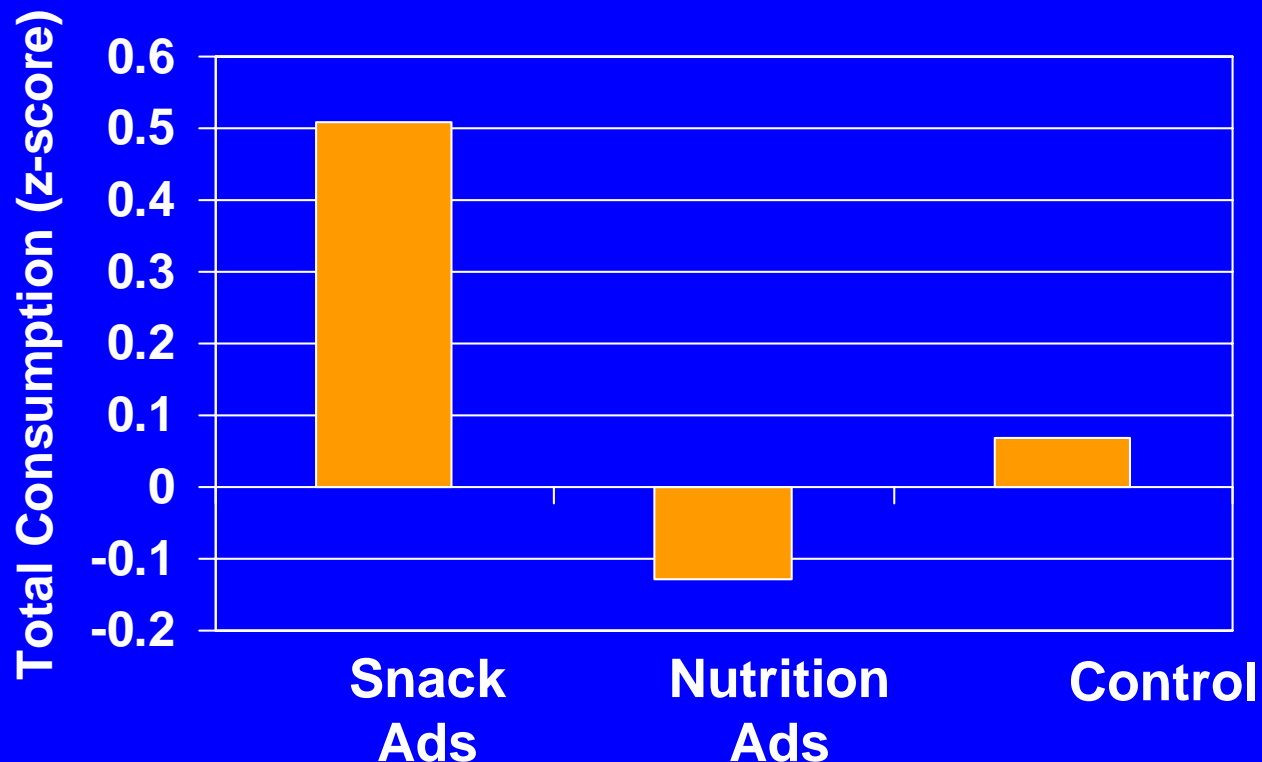
Increased amount consumed while watching by 45%

– 93 kcal in 30 minutes



Adults and food ads

Increased snack food consumed after watching – snack ads only



Taste expectancies



Nutrition Info:

Calories: 100

Total Fat: 1.5 g

Sodium: 140 mg

Dietary Fiber: 6 g

Sugar: 9 g

Protein: 3 g

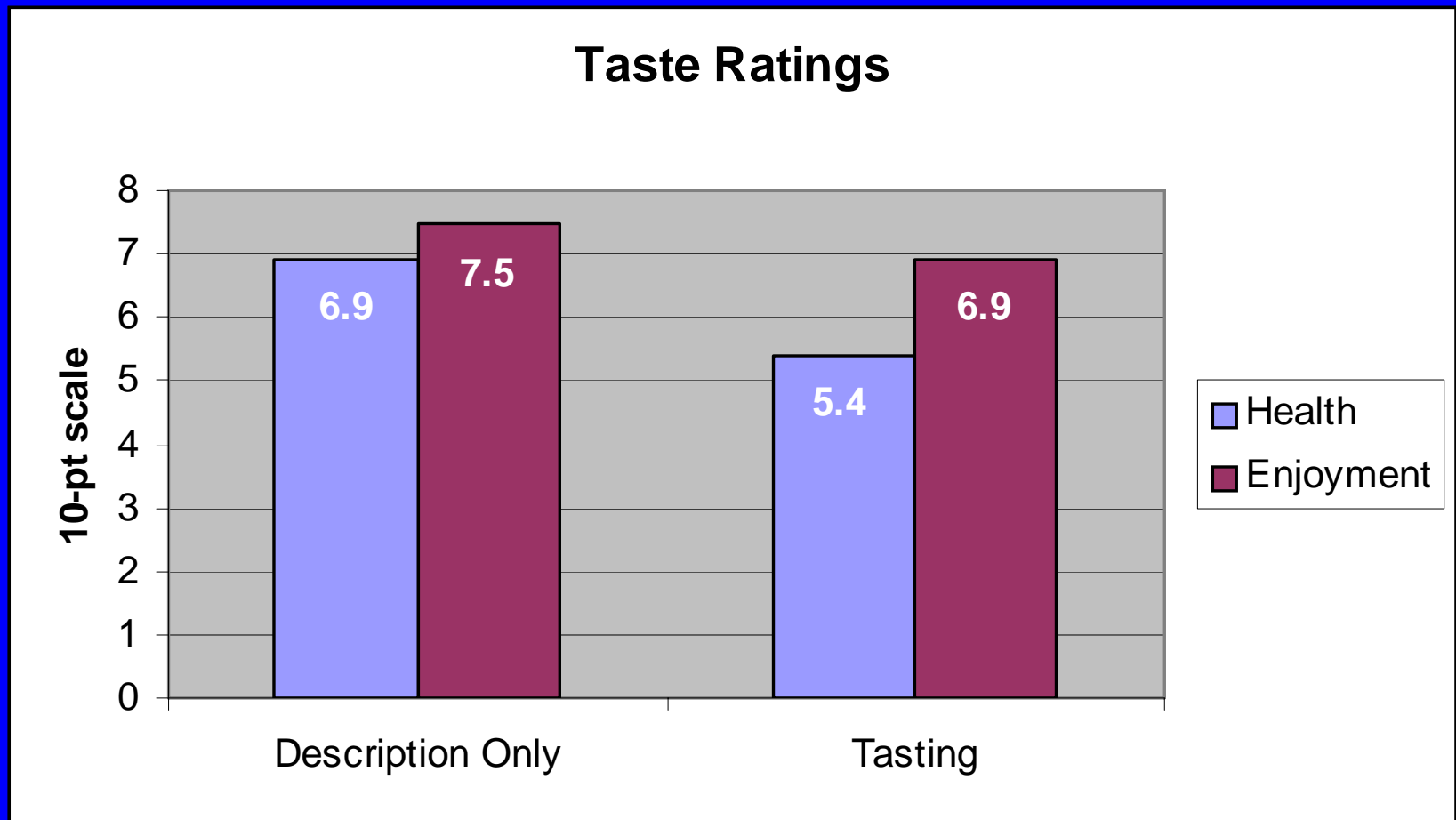
Healthy Description

These chocolaty muffins not only taste good, but they're **good for you** too! Full of **wholesome** benefits, each wonderful muffin is made with **all-natural** ingredients and **no artificial** preservatives, flavors or colors. And every bit is filled with dark chocolate chips. Dark chocolate is a natural **anti-oxidant**, making them an even healthier choice. To top it all...

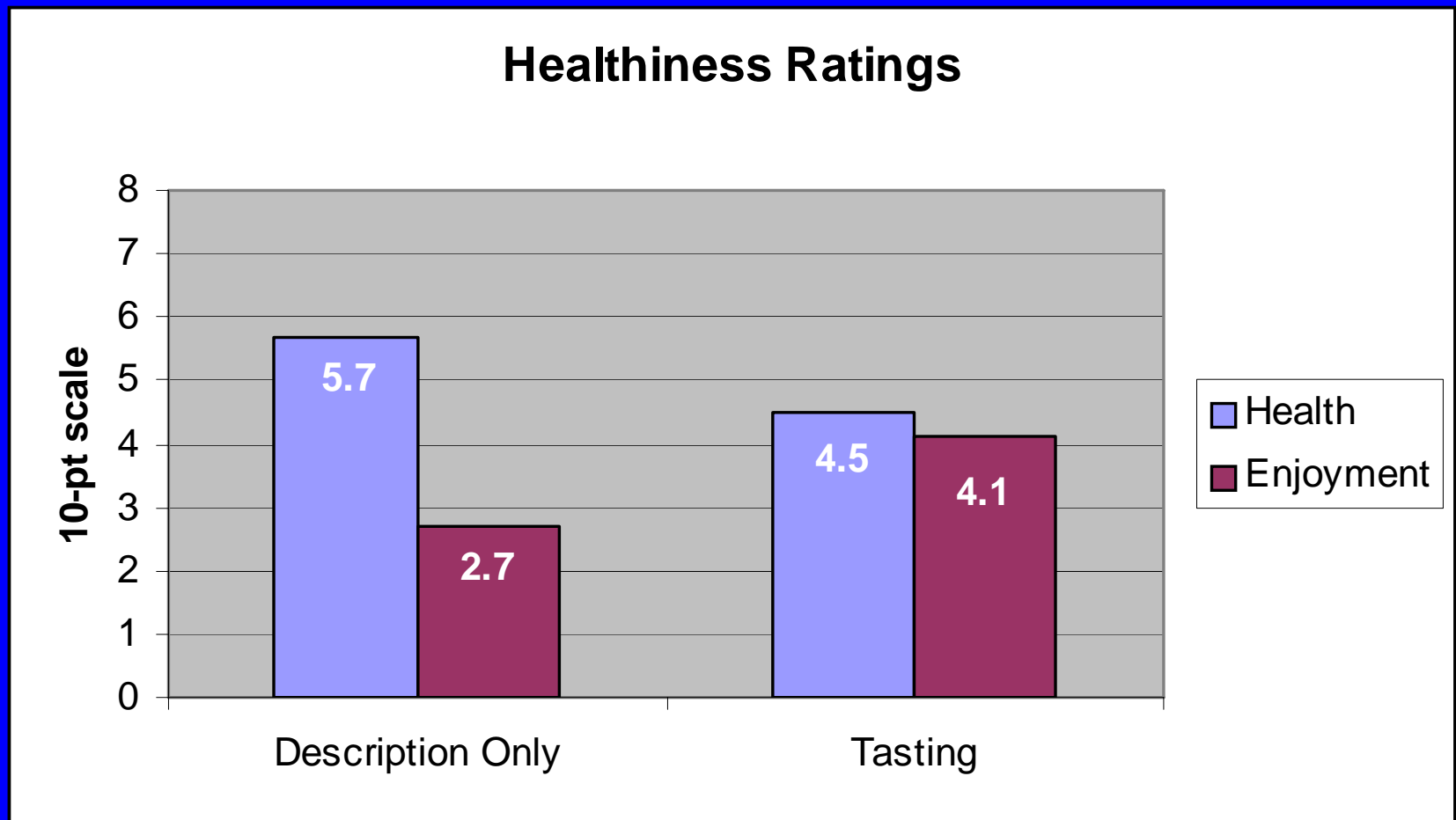
Hedonic Description

From the very first mouthful, you will **love** these chocolaty muffins. You are sure to **enjoy** the burst of intense chocolate flavor and **wonderful** chewy texture. These muffins are full of **delectable** chocolate chips that **melt in your mouth** in each bite. So sweet, delicious and **satisfying**. After only a taste you will find that they are **scrumptious!** The chewy texture...

Expectancies affected taste



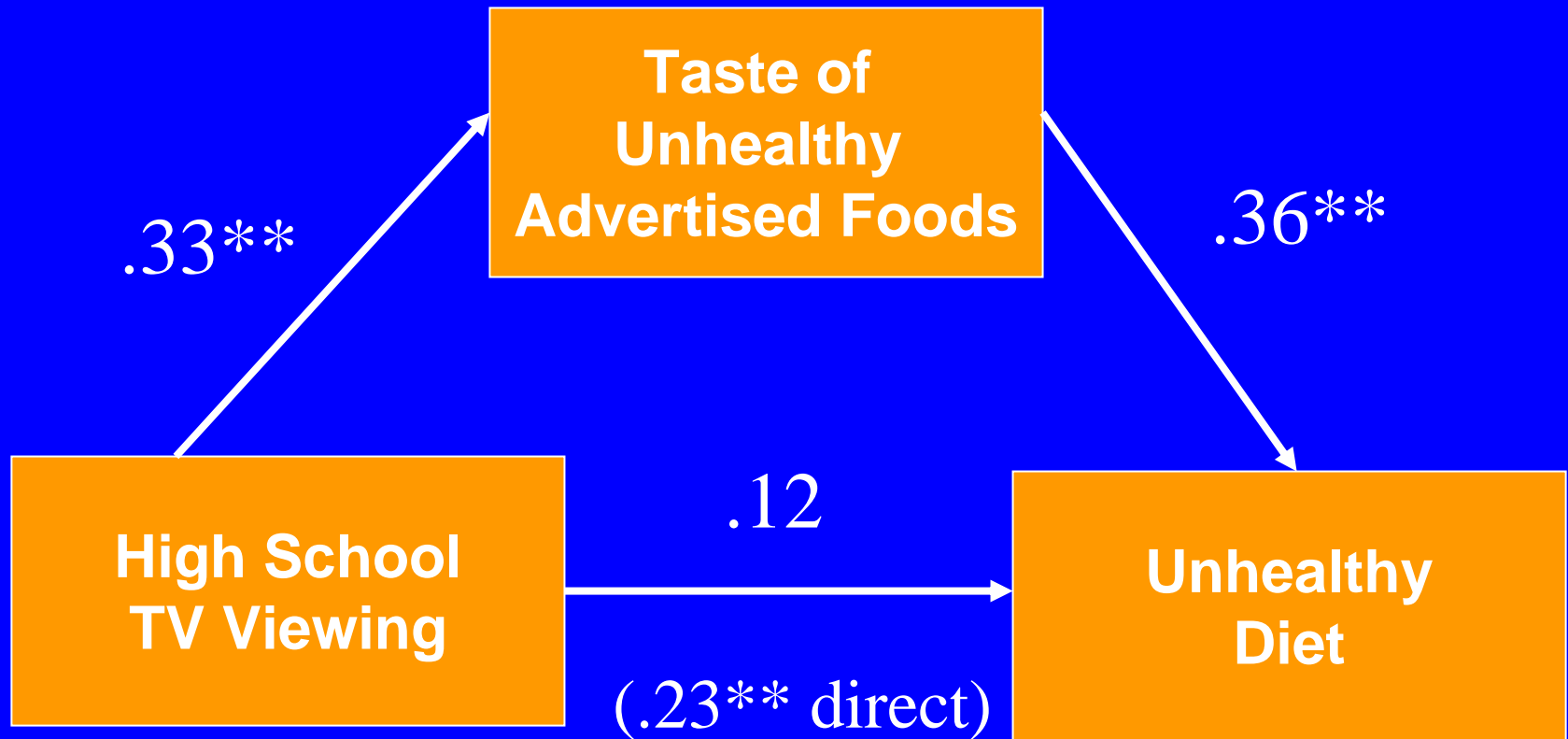
But not perceived healthiness



TV viewing and diet



TV viewing and diet



Food advertising to children

- Rewards unhealthy behaviors
 - Snacking
 - Anywhere, any time
 - Fun, happiness, “cool”



Sources: Folta et al., 2006; Harrison & Marske, 2005; Reece, Rifon, & Rodriguez, 1999