

# Spot the Block: Get Your Food Facts First

Soon, there just may be some noticeably healthier kids running around the block. They might expect to live longer and have less chance for chronic diseases, because they'll be better educated about the benefits of healthy food choices—that is, once they "Spot the Block."

*check out >> [www.SpotTheBlock.com](http://www.SpotTheBlock.com)*

Spot the Block is an educational campaign launched by FDA and the Time Warner Cartoon Network to encourage "tweens" (youth ages 9 to 13) to look for (spot) and use the Nutrition Facts (the block) to make healthy food choices. In this way, the two organizations hope to prevent overweight and obesity in the early years, which can ultimately help young people stay healthy and prevent health problems in adulthood.

## About Spot the Block

Major elements of the Spot the Block campaign respond to one of nine priorities—nutrition—identified by the Department of Health and Human Services for transforming America's health care system. The elements are based on recommendations from both the FDA's Obesity Working Group and the federal government's 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The dietary guidelines contain science-based advice designed to help Americans choose diets that meet nutritional requirements without exceeding caloric needs. In addition, the guidelines promote health, support active lives, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

The Spot-the-Block theme for tweens is "get your food facts first." This message encourages kids to read and think about food facts before deciding what to eat. Other key messages of the program include:

- **Check out the serving size:** Kids are reminded that one package isn't necessarily one serving.
- **Consider the calories:** Kids are encouraged to use these numbers (40 being low; 100, moderate; 400, high) to plan their calorie intake.
- **Choose nutrients wisely:** Kids are encouraged to pick foods that are lower in certain fats, cholesterol, sodium, and sugars when making daily food choices.

## Partnering for Kid Appeal

Spot the Block features a custom interactive Web page on Cartoon Network's Web site. Cartoon Network is an ad-supported cable service of classic animated entertainment for kids and families that is currently seen in more than 91 million U.S. homes and 160 countries around the world. To promote Spot the Block across the country, online, and on the air, the Cartoon Network features:

- Two animated on-air spots
- Popular animated characters
- A customized Web site ([www.SpotTheBlock.com](http://www.SpotTheBlock.com)) housed on [CartoonNetwork.com](http://CartoonNetwork.com), featuring the animated spots along with interactive nutrition messages and a nutrition label game
- Integration of Spot the Block messages with Cartoon Network's nationwide Get Animated health and fitness initiative



## Parents are Partners Too

Spot the Block includes a parent component that will launch later this year. As influential role models for their children, parents are in a key position to reinforce the messages of the program at home. FDA is hoping that parents will:

- urge their kids to look for, read, and think about the Nutrition Facts information on food packaging
- share Spot the Block's key messages with their tweens
- use mealtime and grocery shopping as a means to teach kids to read labels together and discuss healthy eating habits
- encourage their tweens to check out [www.SpotTheBlock.com](http://www.SpotTheBlock.com)

## About Obesity

Since the late 1980s, adult obesity has steadily increased to the point where more than 65 percent of all Americans are now overweight. Over 30 percent of Americans are obese. In addition, 15 percent of children and adolescents ages 6-19 are overweight—nearly double the rate of 20 years ago.

Overweight and obesity increase the risk of coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. By some estimates, obesity results in thousands of deaths a year and accounts for \$117 billion in U.S. health care expenses annually. Spot the Block supports the Department of Health and Human Services' commitment to help Americans live longer and healthier lives by reducing overweight, obesity, and poor nutrition.