



# Food giants 'con' kids

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**CHILDREN** are being conned by food companies who are making fatty and sugary foods appear to be healthy, a study suggests.

Some of Australia's most popular brands, including Kellogg's and Nestle, have been accused of making food that appeals to children look healthier than it actually is, the Flinders University study shows.

Researchers, led by lecturer Kaye Mehte, found 157 products on a major supermarket chain's shelves with packaging designed to appeal to children through cartoons, competitions and give-aways.

More than three-quarters of these products were deemed to be unhealthy, primarily because they are high in fat and sugar.

But more than half of them had prominent nutrition claims on the packaging, boasting that the product is, for example, "99 per cent fat free", "high in calcium" or has "no artificial colours", they found.

"This has the potential to mislead and confuse children as well as parents who would be more inclined to purchase products carrying claims about health and nutrition," Dr Mehte said.

Jane Martin, executive manager of the Obesity Policy Coalition said using the techniques to attract children to unhealthy food was "simply unethical".

A Nestle spokeswoman denied the company misled children or made unhealthy food appear to be healthy. She said products such as Milo cereal met the Heart Foundation Tick nutrient criteria.

A Kellogg's spokesman said products had daily intake guidelines so parents could weigh up nutritional information.

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