Navigating the 'less healthy' online ad ban: key guidance



Guidance applies to paid-for B2C ads for less healthy food and drink products that are directed at UK audiences

No

No

No

No

Can an ad run online from 1 October 2025?

Indicative guidance only. Please refer to the final CAP guidance once published.

Does the advertiser have 250 or more UK employees?

Note: franchises are treated as part of the franchisor business

Yes

Is the ad for, or does it feature/refer to an identifiable product(s) or a brand logo that has the effect of identifying a specific less healthy product or products?*

If an average consumer could identify a specific product(s) from the ad, it would in scope of the ban. Logos, audio or other factors that consumers associate with a product(s) could contribute to this.

Yes

Does the product fall within one of the 'less healthy' categories in the list** below?

Yes

Is the product classed as high in fat, salt or sugar (HFSS) according to the Nutrient Profiling Model?***

(The brand should have or be able to provide this information for existing products, as it's already needed for existing CAP Code rules)

Yes

It's covered by the online ad ban. Paid-for ads for or featuring/referring to this product (or a brand logo that has the effect of identifying a specific less healthy product(s)) cannot run online, except in specific media:

- audio-only media that is streamed
- digital out-of-home

Notes:

- For video on-demand and IPTV, the online ad ban applies to services not regulated by Ofcom. Check with the media owner
- Broadcast TV, IPTV and 'On-demand programme services' (ODPS)
 that are regulated by Ofcom will be subject to a 9pm watershed,
 not covered by this chart

The ad is not covered by the online ad ban. Small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) can run brand and product advertising for all 'less healthy' products online.

Note: existing CAP Code age restrictions continue to apply on placement/targeting of all HFSS ads in all non-broadcast media until further notice

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*If more than one, go through the rest of the questions for each one. If any of the products/logos featured or referred to is in scope, the whole ad will be.

**The 'less healthy' product categories and types are set out in the Advertising (Less Healthy Food Definitions and Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

The Government has also published explanatory guidance on the food and drink in scope.

- Prepared soft drinks containing sugar ingredients (with the exception of alcohol substitute drinks)
- Savoury snacks
- · Breakfast cereals
- Confectionary including chocolates and sweets
- Ice cream, ice Iollies and similar frozen products
- Cakes and cupcakes
- Sweet biscuits and bars based on one or more of nuts, seeds or cereal
- Morning goods (including croissants and similar items)
- Desserts and puddings
- Sweetened (whether with sugar or otherwise) yoghurt and fromage frais
- Pizza (except plain pizza bases)
- Prepared potato and sweet potato products (e.g. roast potatoes, croquettes, fries and wedges, hash browns, rostis)
- Products marketed as ready for cooking or reheating without requiring further preparation that are intended to be consumed as a complete meal, as the main element of a meal, or ordered separately from a menu to form a main meal