

'Eat Them To Defeat Them' returns to build on its success in improving children's vegetable consumption

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Veg Power, ITV, Channel 4 and Sky Media's multi award-winning and highly effective campaign now in its 6th year

Campaign proven to increase veg consumption across the UK and support improvements in children's dietary health

9th February 2024 // Veg Power, ITV, Channel 4 and Sky Media announced today that their multi award-winning *Eat Them To Defeat Them* campaign is returning to TV screens and primary schools across the UK in mid-February. Now in its sixth year, the campaign, originally launched by ITV and Veg Power and proven to increase children's vegetable consumption, aims to build on the behaviour change success achieved in previous years. It will launch during the final of ITV's *The Masked Singer* on Saturday 17th February.

80% of children in the UK are not eating enough vegetables and worryingly a third of kids are eating less than a portion per day.¹ This major public health issue will not only have a negative impact on many aspects of children's health, but it has huge ramifications later in life. Research indicates that poor diet in childhood not only disadvantages them as kids but it extends into adulthood, resulting in increased healthcare costs and reduced productivity.²

The *Eat Them To Defeat Them* campaign inspires kids to eat more veg by combining the power of advertising with a highly effective schools' programme. It brings together a huge alliance including TV advertising, celebrities, supermarkets, chefs, schools, communities and families. Since it launched in 2019, over 1.5 million different children from 4,884 primary and special schools have benefited from the schools' programme. The campaign has been sponsored by major supermarket and food brands Aldi, Birds Eye, Co-op, Sainsbury's and Tesco. Media agency, Essence, has also secured pro-bono contributions from advertising and media partners, including Mumsnet, Spotify, First News, Delicious and others to extend the reach of the campaign and encourage children to feel more enthusiastic about eating vegetables.

Year on year, the campaign has been successful in engaging children on the topic and encouraging them to give veg a try. More recently, results from the *Eat Them to Defeat Them* 5-year evaluation confirmed the campaign was having a positive impact on children's long term vegetable eating habits. 53% of parents with children involved in the schools' programme more than once reported a long-term benefit, in not only the volume of vegetables consumed but also the variety.⁴ Importantly, the schools' programme is also reaching the most "veg resistant" kids. After last year's campaign, 66% of parents with kids who participated in the schools' programme and whose children vocally disliked vegetables, said their child ate more vegetables due to their participation in *Eat Them to Defeat Them*. Interestingly, the impact of the campaign extends to the whole family with 31% of parents who saw our TV advert last year saying they ate more vegetables as a result.

The 2024 *Eat Them To Defeat Them* campaign is an alliance between ITV, Channel 4 and Sky Media who have collectively contributed over £18m of advertising to this campaign since it began. This year's campaign, developed pro bono by adam&eveDDB, will return to TV screens on Saturday 17th February during the final of *The Masked Singer* on ITV. The schools' programme, launching on Monday 19th February, is set to reach 637,000 children from 2,370 schools across the UK, including all primary schools in Wales due to funding support from the Welsh Government. Returning to schools with a new creative theme 'The Big Chomp', children will be encouraged to defeat the veg one bite at a time with supporting visuals and fun activities. All this extra chewing will have the added bonus of protecting children's teeth from the bacteria that cause tooth decay, the leading cause of hospital admissions in under 10s and another UK public health issue.^{5,6}

Dan Parker, Chief Executive, Veg Power said, “Our evaluation has shown that this campaign is having a much-needed positive impact on children’s diets and we can’t wait for more children and their families to benefit. We know that changing behaviour and dietary health in the UK isn’t going to happen overnight, but we are delighted with the inroads our campaign and others working in this space have achieved. As always a massive thank you to everyone who has supported us this year!”

Susie Braun, Director of Social Purpose, ITV said: “*Eat Them To Defeat Them* has continuously proved to be an effective way of encouraging healthier eating habits in children, while making it fun. ITV is proud to have continued this partnership once again.”

Verica Djurdjevic, Chief Revenue Officer, Channel 4, said: “Channel 4 has long championed programming that supports viewers to make informed choices around food, health and wellbeing. It is clear that TV advertising has an equally vital role to play in advancing health issues and inspiring positive choices. We’re delighted that around one third of parents who watched last year’s *Eat Them To Defeat Them* TV ad report eating more vegetables as a result. We look forward to building on this success in the sixth year of this partnership with ITV, Sky Media and Veg Power.”

Brett Aumuller, Managing Director, Sky Media said: “*Eat Them To Defeat Them* is a brilliant example of how creative, multi-channel campaigns can generate conversation, inspire change and make a real difference to people’s lives. We’re thrilled to be part of this collaboration once again and look forward to seeing the campaign return to the nation’s TV screens soon.”

Website and Social

<https://eatthemtodefeatthem.com>

Twitter: @VegPowerUK

#EatThemToDefeatThem

About Veg Power

Veg Power, a not-for-profit Community Interest Company, is improving the UK’s dietary health by tackling the major public health issue of low vegetable consumption. It was founded by the Food Foundation, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, Sir John Hegarty and Baroness Boycott in 2019. It uses advertising

and communications to inspire kids to eat vegetables and create life-long good food habits that they will, in turn, share with their children. Veg Power is a unique alliance, bringing together a diverse network of multidisciplinary experts and partners that have supported the development of our work and our success.

About ITV Social Purpose

ITV's Social Purpose is about using the power of ITV to shape culture for good, using creativity and scale to inspire positive change in the world, and nurture a responsible and inclusive working environment. We use our huge reach and world class talent to champion a wide range of causes, from climate action to diversity, equity and inclusion. Since 2019, we have encouraged the nation to take action to support their physical and mental health. As part of this, ITV, along with Channel 4 and Sky, encourage the UK's kids to eat more healthily through *Eat Them To Defeat Them*.

<https://www.itvplc.com/socialpurpose/overview>

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