

Viewpoint: Blame Big Tobacco for helping create junk food industry

For decades, tobacco companies hooked people on cigarettes by making their products [more addictive](#). Now, a new study suggests that tobacco companies may have used a similar strategy to hook people on processed foods.

In the 1980s, tobacco giants Philip Morris and R.J. Reynolds acquired the major food companies Kraft, General Foods and Nabisco, allowing tobacco firms to dominate America's food supply and reap billions in sales from popular brands such as Oreo cookies, Kraft Macaroni & Cheese and Lunchables.

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The new research, published [in the journal Addiction](#), focuses on the rise of "hyper-palatable" foods, which contain potent combinations of fat, sodium, sugar and other additives that can drive people to crave and overeat them. The Addiction study found that in the decades when the tobacco giants owned the world's leading food companies, the foods that they sold were far more likely to be hyper-palatable than similar foods not owned by tobacco companies.

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They found that tobacco-owned foods were 80 percent more likely to contain potent combinations of carbs and sodium that made them hyper-palatable. Tobacco-owned brands were also 29 percent more likely to contain similarly potent combinations of fat and sodium.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)