



November 16, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

## No More Deductions

On Monday, I talked about why I oppose extra taxes on unhealthy foods. But there was an idea in the *Lancet* series on obesity that I did favor; it hasn't been proposed anywhere yet, but I like it.

The authors proposed eliminating the tax deduction for advertising unhealthy foods. Want to advertise the high-fat, highly refined carbohydrate, sugary foods on television, in print, or on the internet? Fine, but you don't get to deduct the cost of advertising from your business tax.

I know that companies can argue, as they do now, that burgers and fries and pizza can be part of a nutritious diet. I don't disagree, but that isn't what they're advertising. They advertise a large pizza with all the toppings for \$10 or \$11. What they don't say is that it has 800 calories per slice with 70% of the calories coming from fat—and you should only eat one slice. Tell the whole story and teach the public how your product can be part of a nutritious diet, or you don't get to deduct the cost of the ad as a business expense. Seems like a reasonable way to deal with unhealthy food to me.

What are you prepared to do today?

***Dr. Chet***

**Reference:** Lancet. 2011; 378(9793):838-847.

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