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**Checklist: When to use mass and digital media**

Some of the situations in which media have been found to be most appropriate are:

1. *When wide exposure is desired.* Mass media and digital offer the widest possible exposure. Cost-benefit considerations need to be considered when selecting channels.
2. *When the time frame is urgent.* Mass and digital media offer the best opportunity for reaching either large numbers of people or specific target groups within a short time frame.
3. *When public discussion is likely to facilitate the educational process.* Media messages can be emotional and thought provoking. Because of the possible breadth of coverage, intrusion can occur at many different levels, stimulating discussion and thereby expanding the impact of a message. However, planning needs to be put in place to address counter arguments and views that may arise as part of this process.
4. *When awareness and attitude change are main goals.* All forms of media are awareness- creating tools. Where awareness of a health issue is important to the resolution of that issue, mass and digital media can increase awareness quickly and effectively.
5. *When the mass media sector is ‘on-*side’. Where journalists, editors and programmers are supportive and well briefed and open access has been established to on-going expert briefing from public health authorities
6. *When accompanying on-the-ground back-up can be provided.* Regardless of whether media alone may be sufficient to influence health behaviour. Impacts will be more pronounced with the support of back-up community based programmes and services. Most health behaviour changes require constant reinforcement. Media programmes are most effective where the opportunity exists for long-term follow up. This can take the form of short bursts of media activity over an extended period, and or follow up activities related to media intervention.
7. *When a sufficient budget exists.* Paid advertising, especially via television, can be very expensive, and the development and maintenance of bespoke interactive digital services also require substantial funds. Even limited reach media such as pamphlets and posters can be expensive, depending on quality and quantity and the population penetration required.
8. *When the communication goal is simple.* In general, the more complex the targeted change, the more back up is required to supplement informational health programmes.