

# People's diets show a sugar-fat seesaw

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Research published today shows why people find it hard to follow Government guidelines to cut their fat and sugars intake at the same time - a phenomenon known as the sugar-fat seesaw.

The review, published in the journal *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition*, looked at 53 scientific papers and found a strong and consistent inverse association in the percentage of energy coming from fats and sugars. People with diets low in sugars were likely to be high in fat, and vice-versa. Nutritionists have labelled this the 'sugar-fat seesaw'.

Dr Michele Sadler, who led the research team, said: "A key reason that we see this sugar-fat seesaw is likely to be because sources of sugars such as fruit, breakfast cereals and juices are low in fat, while sources of [fat](#) such as oils and [meat products](#) are low in sugar."

In the UK [dietary guidelines](#) are set and described as a percentage of daily energy intakes. Therefore, the researchers suggest that people may find it difficult to follow advice to reduce the sugars and fats contribution to energy intakes at the same time, something recommended by the Government.

Dr Sadler added: "This study highlights the need to focus dietary messages on eating a healthy balanced diet and not categorising individual nutrients as good or bad, which could result in unbalanced [dietary habits](#)."

**More information:** Sadler MJ, McNulty H & Gibson S (2013) Sugar-

fat seesaw: A systematic review of the evidence. Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition, [DOI: 10.1080/10408398.2011.654013](https://doi.org/10.1080/10408398.2011.654013)

Provided by Sugar Nutrition UK

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