

"Sugar is the new tobacco," says expert

January 9 2014



Professor Simon Capewell, from the University of Liverpool's Institute of Psychology, Health and Society is part of a campaign, 'Action on Sugar', aimed at reducing the amount of added sugar in food and soft drinks to help tackle the obesity epidemic.

Professor Capewell is one of a number of leading [health experts](#) from around the world to support the campaign.

Experts want to make the public more aware of the damage that refined

sugars have on our health, and to encourage shoppers to read the labels on food and drink products in order to avoid items with high levels of hidden sugars.

Campaign

The campaign will also highlight children as a particularly vulnerable group who are targeted by the marketing of high calorie snacks and drinks by the [food industry](#).

Children's health is at particularly risk from high [sugar](#) intake, both in terms of obesity and diabetes, and also dental disease (caries).

The major initial focus of the Action on Sugar group is to convince the food and drink industry and the Department of Health to adopt a reformulation programme to gradually reduce the amount of sugar added to all of their products.

Successful

A similar programme to reduce [salt intake](#), pioneered by Consensus Action on Salt and Health, was very successful. It resulted in 20% to 40% less salt in most supermarket products, and an overall 15% reduction in individual's salt consumption.

'Action on Sugar' calculates that a 20% to 30% reduction in sugar added by the food industry over a three to five years period is easily achievable.

This would result in a valuable reduction in calorie intake, averaging approximately 100 fewer calories per day, and even more in people particularly prone to obesity.

Simon Capewell , Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at the University of Liverpool, UK, said: "Sugar is the new tobacco. Everywhere, sugary drinks and junk foods are now pressed on unsuspecting parents and children by a cynical industry focussed on profit not [health](#)."

"The [obesity epidemic](#) is already generating a huge burden of disease and death. Obesity and diabetes already costs the UK over £5billion every year. Without regulation, these costs will exceed £50billion by 2050". "The public deserves effective action now".

More information: To find out more about 'Action on Sugar' visit: www.actiononsugar.org/

Provided by University of Liverpool

Citation: "Sugar is the new tobacco," says expert (2014, January 9) retrieved 1 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-01-sugar-tobacco-expert.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.
