

Ecuador to target unhealthy diets with 'junk food tax'

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Ecuador plans to impose a "junk food tax" on fast food restaurants, and will use the revenues to address the negative health effects on its citizens of diets laden with salt and fat.

"We are moving past poverty-related problems since the country is progressing a lot, and moving on to problems of affluence," President Rafael Correa said Thursday.

The chief of state, who holds a majority in parliament, said the tax would mainly target international fast-food chains, but did not set a deadline for any legislation or outline its exact content.

"We're talking about these big chains where meat is cooked in pans of oil used over and over, which is a threat to [public health](#)," Correa said.

In power since 2007, the socialist leader has remained popular thanks in part to social programs financed by the country's vast oil sector.

In Ecuador, two-third of adults and one-third of children suffer from obesity, according to Health Ministry figures.

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