

New campaign to reduce child sugar intake

January 6 2015

The reduction in sugar intake which can be made by making four simple adjustments to daily diet has been measured in a new study by the University of Reading and partners Public Health England and Netmums.

On the Family Sugar Challenge, a survey designed to understand the [sugar](#) issue from mums' perspective, families made dietary changes including swapping sugary cereal for plain cereal and eating low-fat lower-sugar yoghurt instead of ice cream. This resulted in an average daily saving of 196g of sugar per family each day, or 49 sugar cubes.

Families followed Public Health England's new Change4Life Sugar Swaps campaign which encourages parents to cut down the amount of sugar their children consume by making one or more simple swaps. The diets of 50 families, 24 of which were selected based on their geographical location for the initial analysis, were assessed in terms of [sugar content](#) before and during the Change4Life's Sugar Swaps. The study found:

- On average the families were consuming 483g of sugar a day at the beginning of the challenge
- Their [sugar intake](#) was reduced to 287g per day when making Sugar Swaps
- This meant an average daily saving of 196g of sugar per family each day, or 49 sugar cubes

Dr Daniel Lamport, Research Fellow at the University of Reading and

Challenge data collection coordinator, comments: "It is fantastic to see that the Sugar Swaps resulted in a reduction in sugar intake for these families. The University of Reading is delighted to support preventative health campaigns such as this which can help make a real difference to the health of the nation."

Eating and drinking too much sugar means extra calories which causes fat to build up inside the body. This can lead to heart disease, some cancers or type 2 diabetes later in life. Children who are overweight or obese when they are young are far more likely to become overweight or obese adults. Recently published data highlights that approximately one in five children aged 4-5 years old and one in three children aged 10-11 years old is overweight or obese.

Change4Life recommends four simple Sugar Swaps for mums to choose from, tackling different 'sugar occasions' in the day:

- The Breakfast Swap: sugary cereal for plain cereal e.g. wholewheat biscuit cereal
- The Drink Swap: e.g. from sugary drinks to sugar-free or no-added-sugar drinks
- The After School Swap: for example from muffin to fruited teacake
- The Pudding Swap: for example from ice cream to low-fat lower-sugar yoghurt

Professor Kevin Fenton, National Director of Health and Wellbeing at Public Health England, comments:

"Reducing sugar intake is important for the health of our children both now and in the future. We are all eating too much sugar and the impact this has on our health is evident.

"This campaign is about taking small steps to address this. We know from past campaigns that making simple swaps works and makes a real difference. This year we wanted to be even more

single minded in our approach, which is why we are focusing on sugar alone. The family challenge highlights that simple swaps could lead to big changes if sustained over time."

Provided by University of Reading

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