

US government quandary: is Nutella dessert or jam?

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The sugary hazelnut paste Nutella has been beloved the world over for 50 years. But is it a dessert or a jam?

The makers of the cocoa-flavored spread say [consumers](#) in the United States are far more likely to spread it on toast than on [ice cream](#), and they are pressuring US authorities to recognize this—a move that would halve the product's official serving size, and thus reduce the fat, sugar and calories appearing on the required label.

The Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday began accepting public comments on the ways consumers use cocoa, cookie and coffee-flavored nut butter spreads and how much they typically eat on a single occasion.

Nutella makers Ferrero in recent years have battled negative publicity due to the product's high sugar content. The [company](#) agreed to stop marketing the product as a health food following a 2012 [class action lawsuit](#) begun by the mother of a four-year-old in California.

According to information the company presented to the FDA in 2014, 74 percent consumers use Nutella on bread. The company cited a 2012 survey of 722 mothers of children aged 3-12. That counters a 1991 survey showing most consumers used the spread as they would a chocolate syrup, information the company now says is out of date.

"Notably, only 2 percent of consumers in the 2012 survey preferred to

use Nutella on ice cream," the company said in a letter to the FDA.

Typically consumers used only a single tablespoon, or between 18 and 23 grams, or half the current serving size, according to the survey.

By 1500 GMT Thursday, the FDA had received 62 comments on a government website. The window for expressing an opinion on the spread vs. syrup debate closes January 3.

The FDA requires all food products to carry labels with nutrition information such as the amount of calories, fat and sugar in a serving size. That information can drive consumer buying choices.

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