

Increased taxes on high fat and high sugar foods will help improve children's diets

November 13 2017

Increasing the tax on high fat and high sugar foods will help improve children's diets. This is one of the recommendations from the British Psychological Society report "Changing behaviour: Childhood nutrition" published this week. The recommendations are aimed at tackling the causes of poor diets in children.

We know that the diets of [children](#) and young people are often low in fruit and vegetables and too high in fat and salt. Research indicates that a child's eating behaviour is affected by their biology, their [home environment](#) and outside factors such as [food advertising](#), [food](#) labelling and the availability of energy-dense fast food and takeaways. This obesogenic environment creates an unhealthy [diet](#) leading to health problems including obesity and diabetes.

The author of the report, Jane Ogden, Professor of Health Psychology at University of Surrey, said: "To change children's diets the government needs to change how children think and their home, school and wider environments. It is time to face the challenge of legislation for food production and provision, and to fund interventions for schools and parents."

The report makes the following recommendations:

- The government should introduce legislation to increase taxation on high fat and high sugar foods and/or enforce manufacturers to lower the amounts of fat, sugar and salt in products and/or more

clearly label high fat, sugary, salty foods.

- The curriculum of parenting programmes should include healthy eating with a focus not only on what to eat but where, when and how to eat.
- The PSHE curriculum should include the role of food, nutrition, malnutrition, obesity and the promotion of healthy eating, exercise and a positive relationship with food.
- Public Health England should be funded to further promote [healthy eating](#) specifically for children, and also across the whole population.

Professor Ogden added: "Legislation and structural changes involving working with the food industry and government intervention; parenting programmes to encourage a healthier home environment and school-based interventions to change children's beliefs about food and their food preferences directly."

Provided by British Psychological Society

Citation: Increased taxes on high fat and high sugar foods will help improve children's diets (2017, November 13) retrieved 29 May 2024 from

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