

Tesco First to Take Action on Sugar

- ***Action on Sugar's plan for sugar reduction is underway!***
- ***Tesco first to commit to reducing added sugars by 5% incrementally a year in ALL own label soft drinks***
- ***Call on the Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt MP to implement this strategy across the whole of the food and drink industry, with robust enforcement measures in place***
- ***The UK can lead the world in reducing both the obesity and type 2 diabetes crisis***

Action on Sugar welcomes the news that Tesco is to become the first retailer to commit to a major sugar reduction programme with a 5% year on year, open ended reduction in sugar across its entire sugary soft drinks range.

Action on Sugar has developed a coherent action plan to reduce excess calories in the UK's diet by gradually reducing the amount of sugars added to soft drinks, and to reduce the sweetness so people get used to less sugar. This is a strategy that was first undertaken by Consensus Action on Salt and health (CASH) and the Food Standards' Agency for salt reduction, and has led to a 15% reduction in salt intakes, a fall in population blood pressure and 8,500 fewer deaths per year from strokes and heart attacks, with cost savings to the NHS of £1.5billion a year [1,2].

Tesco has agreed to an incremental, unobtrusive, reformulation strategy on soft drinks to include:

1. The removal of all added sugar from the "Kids" category in Sept (Brand & Own Label)
2. The reformulation of Tesco Own Label full sugar products by 5% every year on-going
3. Start to move towards removing all Added Sugar from mainstream squash (added sugar has already been removed from own label and Robinsons)
4. Focus on water, squash and flavoured water to promote healthier lives

Professor Graham MacGregor, Chairman of Action on Sugar, the Wolfson Institute, Queen Mary University of London says, *"Incremental, unobtrusive reformulation is the key way of reducing calories across all sweetened drinks – merely having the option of 'diet' or 'no sugar' products does not work, particularly for the most socially deprived. We are delighted that Tesco has agreed that this is exactly the sort of action that we need, and all other retailers must follow suit."*

"The Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt MP can no longer ignore the fact that the current nutrition policy, whereby the food industry is allowed to police themselves (the Responsibility Deal) is, unsurprisingly, not working [3,4]. The UK requires the implementation of this coherent strategy, starting by setting incremental sugar reduction targets for soft drinks across the whole sector. With robust enforcement if they do not comply."



The salt reduction programme pioneered by Consensus Action on Salt and Health (CASH) has become one of the most successful nutritional policies in the UK since the Second World War, by setting targets for the food industry to add less salt to all of their products, over a period of time. As this is done slowly, people do not notice the difference in taste and there is no reduction in sales [1]. Salt intake has fallen in the UK by 15% (between 2001-2011) and most products in the supermarkets have been reduced between 20 to 40%.

A similar programme can now be developed to gradually reduce the amount of added sugar, and the sweetness, in food and soft drinks by setting targets for all foods and soft drinks where sugar has been added. Action On Sugar has calculated that a 19% reduction in sugar added to all soft drinks, over the next four years is equivalent to removing approx. 2 teaspoons of sugar per can, and would result in 477 billion calories being removed from the UK diet, approx. 21kcal per person per day, and more in the socially deprived, who are much more prone to obesity.

Table 1: Predicted reduction in calorie intake of UK diet - 5% Year on Year reduction in sugars added to all sugar-sweetened soft drinks

	Percentage reduction	Total energy intake of UK population from sugar-sweetened soft drinks (billion kcal)	Reduction in energy intake (billion kcal)
Current level*	0%	2,574	-
1st year	5%	2,445	129
2nd year	10%	2,323	251
3rd year	14%	2,207	367
4th year	19%	2,097	477

*2013 BSDA [5]

This is the start of a coherent reformulation programme that will result in a 40% reduction in all foods and drinks with added sugars. This reduction in calorie intake will reverse or halt the obesity epidemic and will also have a significant impact in reducing the burden of chronic disease [6]. The NHS's annual spending on diabetes alone in the UK is projected to increase from £9.8 billion to £16.9 billion over the next 25 years [7]. This programme is practical, will work and will cost very little.

Katharine Jenner, Campaign Director for Action on Sugar says *"We have become a nation hooked on the white stuff, expecting all our food and drink to taste incredibly sweet, and it is making us overweight and obese. If we can slowly and gradually reduce the sugar and the sweetness, as we have already done for salt, we can all get used to far less sugar."*

Table 2: Predicted reduction of sugar in popular sugary soft drinks over 4 years:

Product Name	Sugars (g) per 100 ml	Sugars (g) per 100 ml removed with 19% reduction	Sugars (g) per 330 ml* serving	Teaspoons sugar (g) equiv/330ml * serving	Teaspoons sugars removed with 19% reduction (330ml)
Old Jamaica Ginger Beer 330ml	15.2	2.9	50.2	13	2.4
Tesco Fiery Ginger Beer	13.3	2.5	43.9	11	2.1
Fentimans Traditional Rose Lemonade 275ml	11.7	2.2	38.6	10	1.8
7Up 330ml	11	2.1	36.3	9	1.7
Tesco Classic Cola 2 Litre	10.9	2.1	36.0	9	1.7
Coca-Cola 2 Litre	10.6	2.0	35.0	9	1.7
Pepsi 330ml	10.6	2.0	35.0	9	1.7
Barr Irn Bru	10.3	2.0	34.0	8	1.6
Tesco Original Cola	9.7	1.8	32.0	8	1.5
San Pellegrino Orange 6x330ml	9.7	1.8	32.0	8	1.5
Shloer Apple and White Grape	9.7	1.8	32.0	8	1.5
Fanta Orange 330ml	6.9	1.3	22.8	6	1.1

*Average can size = 330ml

Action on Sugar

Action on Sugar is a group of specialists concerned with sugar and its effects on health. It is successfully working to reach a consensus with the food industry and Government over the harmful effects of a high sugar diet, and bring about a reduction in the amount of sugar in processed foods. Action on Sugar is supported by 23 expert advisors.

Website <http://www.actiononsugar.org/>

Tweet <https://twitter.com/actiononsugar> #LessSugar

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Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine
Barts and The London School of Medicine & Dentistry
Queen Mary University of London
Telephone: 020 7882 6018
London EC1M 6BQ

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