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A THIRST FOR SUGAR?

NEW RESEARCH EXPOSES SHOCKINGLY HIGH SUGAR CONTENT IN FIZZY DRINKS AND CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

- 79% of sugary fizzy drinks contain 6 or more teaspoons of sugar per can (330ml) – WHO’s recommended daily MAXIMUM for sugar [1-2]
- 9 out of 10 sugary fizzy drinks would receive a RED (high) traffic light for sugars [3]
- A typical can of cola contains as much sugar as three and half Krispy Kreme Donuts [4]
- Some elderflower sparkling drinks contain more sugars than Coca Cola
- Two thirds (63%) of ginger beer drinks contain MORE sugars than Coca Cola

NEW independent research by **Action on Sugar** reveals the shockingly high and unnecessary levels of sugar in carbonated sugar-sweetened soft drinks and calls for immediate action NOW to set targets to reduce sugar levels of ALL products in order to halt the obesity epidemic [5].

The survey analysed 232 sugar-sweetened drinks from leading supermarkets [6]. Interestingly the findings revealed huge variations in the sugar content of very similar products, demonstrating sugar levels can come down significantly in soft drinks without it drastically affecting the taste [7].

Sugar-sweetened fizzy drinks are a large contributor to sugars in our diets, especially for children and a hidden source of calories. On average, 16% of adult’s daily added sugar intake comes from soft drinks. For teenagers, it makes up nearly a THIRD (29%) of their daily added sugar intake and contributes to 4.8% of their total energy intake [8]. Over half of the sugary drinks surveyed would contain more sugar per can than is recommended for a child, teenager and adult for a whole day based on the new WHO draft guidelines for sugar [1].

Professor Graham MacGregor says, *"Added sugars are completely unnecessary in our diets and are strongly linked to obesity and Type II Diabetes, as well as to dental caries; which remains a major problem for children and adults."*

"We urge the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt MP, to set incremental targets for sugar reduction now – and to start with these sugary drinks. Replacing sugar with sweeteners is not the answer: we need to reduce overall sweetness so people’s tastes can adjust to having less sweet drinks."

"A similar approach has successfully reduced salt intake; people are consuming 15% less salt than they were 10 years ago, and now prefer less salty foods [9], this policy is estimated to be saving 9,000 lives a year, plus healthcare savings of £1.5billion a year. It is NOW time to do the same for sugar."

NB we have outlined suggested targets, below [10].

Dr Aseem Malhotra says, *“It’s high time to shake-up nutritional labelling for sugar. One can of regular Coca-Cola contains nine teaspoons of added sugar (35g), which is equivalent to 140% of the draft WHO guidelines for added sugar intake [1]. However, the current UK Reference Intake [11] label misleads consumers into assuming they can consume two and half cans of cola and still be within their daily recommended sugar intake! What’s more, evidence now reveals one sugary drink per day is associated with an increase risk (22%) of Type II Diabetes - even in the non-obese [12].”*

Kawther Hashem, nutritionist at Action on Sugar says, *“People are drinking spoonfulls of sugar in their fizzy drinks; even seemingly healthier options such as elderflower can be loaded with sugars. Look on the label for ‘sugars per 100ml’ and switch to a lower or no added sugar variety of your favourite drink, or even better, don’t drink them, they contain nothing of any nutritional value. Drink water and save money too!”*

NB we have a table of swaps below [13].

-ENDS-

Notes to Editor

Tables below, full data tables should be available with this release. For more information contact:

- **National PR - David Clarke:** david@rock-pr.com 07773 225516

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

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

Ref 1 – WHO’s current recommendation, from 2002, is that sugars should make up less than 10% of total energy intake per day. The new draft guideline also proposes that sugars should be less than 10% of total energy intake per day and further suggests that a reduction to below 5% of total energy intake per day would have additional benefits. It is estimated that 5% of total energy intake is equivalent to 25g of sugar per day.

Ref 2 – Serving size has been standardised to 330ml, regular can size. Although many varieties are available in a 330ml can size, some bottles provide 150ml, 250ml or 500ml as a serving size and have been recalculated as 330ml from the 100ml data.

Ref 3 - Colour-coded Nutrition Labelling (Traffic Light Labels)

The ratings for red, amber and green for each nutrient are based on the Department of Health Guide to Creating a Front of Pack (FoP) Nutrition Label for Pre-packed Products Sold Through Retail Outlets:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/207588/FINAL_VERSION_OF_THE_2013_FOP_GUIDANCE_-_WEB.pdf

- Traffic light labels are given per 100ml. Portion size criteria applies to portion/serving sizes greater than 150ml. Traffic light labelling given per portion for drinks based on new front of pack Traffic Light Labelling criteria.

Sugar - Red >13.5g/portion or >11.25g/100ml Amber >2.5≤11.25g/100ml, Green ≤2.25g/100ml

Ref 4 – An Original Glazed Krispy Kreme Donut contains 10g sugars per portion -

<http://www.krispykreme.co.uk/2012/03/Doughnut-Ingredients-Nutritional.pdf>

Ref 5 - About Action on Sugar:

Action on Sugar is a group of specialists concerned with sugar and its effects on health. It is working to reach a consensus with the food industry and Government over the harmful effects of a high sugar diet, and to bring about a reduction in the amount of sugars in processed foods. Action on Sugar is supported by 21 expert advisors.

Ref 6 – Survey details, full survey data available with this release or on request

- This survey looked at the sugars per 100ml and per standardises 300ml portion of 232 carbonated soft drink products from 9 supermarkets (Aldi, Asda, Lidl, The Co-operative, Morrisons, M&S, Sainsbury’s, Tesco and Waitrose), including supermarket own and branded products
- Where possible, data was collected in store or online via the supermarkets website.
- The survey was carried out between the 1st and 30th May 2014 and products checked week commencing 2nd June 2014

Know Your Fizzy Drinks?**Sugar-sweetened cola products:**

Standard Cola Product Name	Sugars (g) per 100ml	Sugars (g) per 330ml* serving	Teaspoons sugar (g) equiv/330ml* serving
Fentimans Traditional Curiosity Cola	11.3	37.3	9.3
Lidl Freeway Cola	10.9	36.0	9.0
Tesco Classic Cola	10.9	36.0	9.0
Sainsbury's Classic Cola	10.8	35.6	8.9
Marks & Spencer Cola	10.7	35.3	8.8
Essential Waitrose Cola	10.7	35.3	8.8
Asda Chosen by You Cola	10.7	35.3	8.8
Coca-Cola	10.6	35.0	8.7
Morrisons Cola	10.6	35.0	8.7
Pepsi can	10.6	35.0	8.7
Aldi VIVE Original Cola	10.6	35.0	8.7
The Co-operative Cola	10.4	34.3	8.6
UBUNTU cola	10.4	34.3	8.6
Dr Pepper	10.4	34.3	8.6
Tesco Original Cola	9.7	32.0	8.0

* Serving size has been standardised to 330ml, regular can size. Although many varieties are available in a 330ml can size, some bottles provide 150ml, 250ml or 500ml as a serving size and have been recalculated as 330ml.

Other sugar-sweetened carbonated flavour drinks

Other carbonated soft drinks	Product	Sugars (g) per 100ml	Sugars (g) per 330ml* serving	Teaspoons sugar (g) equiv/330ml* serving
Ginger Beer	Old Jamaica Ginger Beer with Extra Fiery Jamaica Root Ginger**	16	52.8	13.2
Lemonade	Sainsbury's Cloudy Lemonade	13.5	44.6	11.1
Other	Jammin Sparkling Black Grape Flavour Drink	13.1	43.6	10.9
Orange	Marley's Natural Relaxation Mellow Mood Citrus	12.1	40.3	10.1
Dandelion & Burdock	Fentimans Traditional Dandelion & Burdock	11.8	38.9	9.7
Flavoured Cola	Fentimans Cherrytree Cola	11.6	38.3	9.6
Elderflower	Shloer White Grape and Elderflower	10.7	35.3	8.8
Ginger ale	Sainsbury's American Ginger Ale	9.2	30.4	7.6

* Serving size has been standardised to 330ml, regular can size. Although many varieties are available in a 330ml can size, some bottles provide 150ml, 250ml or 500ml as a serving size and have been recalculated as 330ml.

**Carbohydrate content labelled not sugar (sugar will be the main source of carbohydrate)

Ref 8 – National Diet and Nutrition Survey 2014 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-national-diet-and-nutrition-survey-shows-uk-population-is-eating-too-much-sugar-saturated-fat-and-salt>

Ref 9 - The mean estimated salt intake, derived from urinary sodium excretion, for adults aged 19 to 64 years was 8.1g per day <http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/06/sodium-intakes/>

Ref 10 - Based on the current variation within each flavour of carbonated soft drinks surveyed, Action on Sugar suggests the following initial targets for drinks with no added natural or artificial sweeteners:

Flavour	Sugars (g) per 100ml
Cola	9.5
Cream Soda	10
Dandelion & Burdock	9
Elderflower	7
Lemonade	7
Ginger Beer	9
Ginger ale	6
Orange	5

Ref 11 – Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) are now ‘Reference Intakes’, although on packaging (GDA) is still labelled on many products - http://www.gdalabel.org.uk/gda/gda_values.aspx

Ref - InterAct c. Consumption of sweet beverages and Type II Diabetes incidence in European adults: results from EPIC-InterAct. Diabetologia 2013;56:1520-30.
http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/newsandeventspggrp/imperialcollege/newssummary/news_24-4-2013-16-31-35

Ref 13 - **Highest** and **lowest** sugar containing examples of products for each flavour of carbonated soft drink

Flavour	Highest	Sugars (g) per 100ml	Lowest	Sugars (g) per 100ml
Cola	Fentimans Traditional Curiosity Cola	11.3	Tesco Original Cola	9.7
Dandelion & Burdock	Fentimans Traditional Dandelion & Burdock	11.8	Asda Chosen by you Dandelion & Burdock	6.8*
Elderflower	Shloer White Grape and Elderflower	10.7	Bottlegreen Sparkling Elderflower	7.0
Lemonade	Sainsbury's Cloudy Lemonade	13.5	The Co-operative Lemonade	1.0*
Ginger Beer	Old Jamaica Ginger Beer with Extra Fiery Jamaica Root Ginger**	16.0	Asda Chosen by You Ginger Beer	7.0*
Ginger ale	Sainsbury's American Ginger Ale	9.2	Morrisons American Ginger Ale	3.8*
Orange	Marley's Natural Relaxation Mellow Mood Citrus	12.1	Pure Pret Sparkling orange	7.9***
Other	Jammin Sparkling Black Grape Flavour Drink	13.1	Tango Apple 2 Litres	2.1*

*Contains or may contain some natural or artificial sweeteners

** Carbohydrate content labelled not sugar (sugar will be the main source of carbohydrate)

***Contains no added sugar, sugar content is from fruit juice