

Food Standards Agency voluntary recommendations on saturated fat reductions for biscuits, cakes, buns and chocolate confectionery added sugar reductions in soft drinks, and portion size availability, for chocolate confectionery and soft drinks

As part of the Food Standards Agency's Saturated Fat and Energy Intake Programme¹, the Agency has published the following voluntary recommendations to the food industry on levels of reductions in saturated fat for biscuits, cakes, buns, chocolate confectionery, added sugar for soft drinks, and increased availability of smaller single-portion sizes for chocolate confectionery and soft drinks as key contributors to saturated fat and energy intakes in the UK.

The FSA recognises the real progress that has been made by many food and drink companies to reformulate and make changes to products to make them healthier. We acknowledge and welcome this activity and challenge the whole industry to match or exceed the work of these progressive companies. The baseline dates set for the specific recommendations take account of these reformulations.

We encourage businesses to showcase their achievements and any commitments for further planned work by submitting them for publication on the FSA website in an Achievements and Commitments Table due to be published in summer 2010.

The recommendations are voluntary. They apply to mainstream products – not to low energy/fat/saturated fat/sugar versions of existing mainstream products.

It is for individual businesses to consider the recommendations and determine how they may be achieved and where possible even exceeded in the context of their own business portfolios. We encourage businesses to prioritise actions that will offer maximum nutritional benefit to the future health of the population and welcome the use of alternative means to those indicated in the recommendations to achieve the same or greater outcomes.

We recognise that small businesses (those with fewer than 50 employees) and those that produce traditional, niche and seasonal products may face greater challenges in achieving the recommendations within the timeframes indicated. We encourage these businesses to take action to consider what improvements are possible to the nutrition profile of their products and to provide a wider availability of smaller portion sizes, to implement such changes where possible and discuss these with the Agency.

Reformulation of mainstream products to reduce energy/fat/saturated fat/sugar should not result in increased levels of total fat, trans fat or sugar added to the product recipe.

¹ www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating/satfatenergy/satfatprog/

The recommendations include timeframes at which point the Agency will review progress in achieving the recommendations and consider what further work with industry is necessary to achieve public health goals.

Final Recommendations 2010

Soft drinks – non-alcoholic carbonated, dilutable, still and juice drinks

For existing carbonated, dilutable, still and juice drinks containing 8 g total sugar/100 ml or more:- by the end of 2012, reduce the level of added sugarⁱ in each product by at least 4% compared to the level of added sugar present in that product during 2008. This reduction should be accompanied by a calorie reduction unless a technical case can be made that this is not achievable. For new drinks containing more than 8 g total sugar/100 ml, the product should have at least 4% less sugar than the nearest equivalent existing product on the market in 2008.

For existing and new single-portion carbonates, still and juice drinks containing added sugar:- by the end of 2015, businesses should make readily available single-portion packaging sizes equal to 250 ml or less for purchase singly and as part of a multipack and market these in such a way to encourage consumer preference for these smaller single-portion sizes, for example, by offering the smaller single-portion sizes at proportional value for money for consumers as larger packs.

Chocolate confectionery

For existing and new single-portion chocolate block products that exceed 40 g packaging weight:- by the end of 2012, businesses should make readily available single-portion packaging sizes equal to or less than 40 g for purchase singly and as part of a multipack and market these in such a way to encourage consumer preference for these smaller single-portion sizes, for example, by offering the smaller single-portion sizes at proportional value for money for consumers as larger packs.

For existing and new single-portion chocolate confectionery countlines that exceed 50 g packaging weight:- by the end of 2012, businesses should make readily available single-portion packaging sizes equal to or less than 50 g for purchase singly and as part of a multipack and market these in such a way to encourage consumer preference for these smaller single-portion sizes, for example, by offering the smaller single-portion sizes at proportional value for money for consumers as larger packs.

For existing chocolate confectionery countlines:- by the end of 2012, reduce the saturated fat level by at least 10% compared to the level of saturated fat present in that product during 2008. This reduction should be accompanied by a calorie reduction, unless not technically possible in which case businesses should look at other opportunities for calorie reduction e.g. portion size. For new products, the product should have at least 10% less saturated fat than the nearest equivalent existing product on the market in 2008.

For existing plain sweet and savoury biscuitsⁱⁱ:- by the end of 2012, reduce the saturated fat content by at least 10% compared to the level of saturated fat present in that product during 2008. This reduction should be accompanied by a calorie reduction, unless not technically possible in which case businesses should look at other opportunities for calorie reduction e.g. portion size. For new products, the product should contain at least 10% less saturated fat than the nearest equivalent existing product on the market in 2008.

For existing non-plain biscuits that do not contain chocolateⁱⁱⁱ:- by the end of 2012, reduce the saturated fat content by at least 5% compared to the level of saturated fat in that product during 2008. This reduction should be accompanied by a calorie reduction, unless not technically possible in which case businesses should look at other opportunities for calorie reduction e.g. portion size. For new products, the product should contain at least 5% less saturated fat than the nearest equivalent existing product on the market in 2008.

For existing biscuits containing chocolate^{iv}:- by the end of 2014, reduce the saturated fat content by at least 5% compared to the level of saturated fat in that product during 2008. This reduction should be accompanied by a calorie reduction, unless not technically possible in which case businesses should look at other opportunities for calorie reduction e.g. portion size. For new products, the product should contain at least 5% less saturated fat than the nearest equivalent existing product on the market in 2008.

For existing plain cakes^v:- by the end of 2012, reduce the saturated fat content by at least 10% compared to the level of saturated fat in that product during 2008. This reduction should be accompanied by a calorie reduction, unless not technically possible in which case businesses should look at other opportunities for calorie reduction e.g. portion size. For new products, the product should contain at least 10% less saturated fat than the nearest equivalent existing product on the market in 2008.

For existing non-plain cakes^{vi}:- by the end of 2014, reduce the saturated fat content by at least 5% compared to the level of saturated fat in that product during 2008. This reduction should be accompanied by a calorie reduction, unless not technically possible in which case businesses should look at other opportunities for calorie reduction e.g. portion size. For new products, the product should contain at least 5% less saturated fat than the nearest equivalent existing product on the market in 2008.

For doughnuts and other fried buns:- move to a lower saturated-fat frying oil where possible and reduce calories, unless not technically possible in which case businesses should look at other opportunities for calorie reduction e.g. portion size.

For all products:- Reformulation to reduce energy/fat/saturated fat/sugar should not result in increased levels of total fat, trans fat or sugar added to the product recipe.

ⁱ Added sugar, for the purpose of these recommendations, includes any mono- or disaccharide or other food used for its sweetening properties, but does not include fruit juice used as a characterising ingredient.

ⁱⁱ Including biscuits with ingredients used solely for flavouring purposes i.e. ginger, lemon.

ⁱⁱⁱ Including biscuits with additions i.e. fruit, nuts, cream.

^{iv} Including biscuits coated in chocolate – full or half-coated – and biscuits containing chocolate chips or pieces.

^v Including cakes with ingredients used solely for flavouring purposes i.e. ginger, lemon, coffee and iced plain cakes.

^{vi} Including cakes with additions i.e. chocolate, fruit, nuts, and that are coated and/or filled.