
WHO OPENS PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT SUGARS GUIDELINE

Geneva, 5 March 2014 – The World Health Organization (WHO) is launching a public consultation on its draft guideline on sugars intake. When finalized, the guideline will provide countries with recommendations on limiting the consumption of sugars to reduce public health problems like obesity and dental caries (commonly referred to as tooth decay).

Comments on the draft guideline will be accepted via the WHO web site from 5 through 31 March 2014. Anyone who wishes to comment must submit a declaration of interests. An expert peer-review process will happen over the same period. Once the peer-review and public consultation are completed, all comments will be reviewed, the draft guidelines will be revised if necessary and cleared by WHO's Guidelines Review Committee before being finalized.

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. It further suggests that a reduction to below 5% of total energy intake per day would have additional benefits. Five per cent of total energy intake is equivalent to around 25 grams (around 6 teaspoons) of sugar per day for an adult of normal Body Mass Index (BMI).

The suggested limits on intake of sugars in the draft guideline apply to all monosaccharides (such as glucose, fructose) and disaccharides (such as sucrose or table sugar) that are added to food by the manufacturer, the cook or the consumer as well as sugars that are naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juices, and fruit concentrates.

Much of the sugars consumed today are "hidden" in processed foods that are not usually seen as sweets. For example, 1 tablespoon of ketchup contains around 4 grams (around 1 teaspoon) of sugars. A single can of sugar-sweetened soda contains up to 40 grams (around 10 teaspoons) of sugar.

The draft guideline was formulated based on analyses of all published scientific studies on the consumption of sugars and how that relates to excess weight gain and tooth decay in adults and children.

The draft guideline can be downloaded (after submission of a Declaration of Interests) and comments can be submitted here: www.who.int/nutrition/sugars_public_consultation.

World Health Organization. Media centre. WHO opens public consultation on draft sugars guideline [Internet]. Geneva: WHO; 2014 [cited 2014 Mar 27]. Available from: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2014/consultation-sugar-guideline/en/>.