

UNILEVER'S POSITION ON SUGAR REDUCTION



Background

A balanced diet and healthy lifestyle is essential to minimise the risk of certain diseases such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Many authorities have expressed concern that consuming too much sugar can increase the risks of excessive energy intake. Sustained excess energy intake, from any source, without sufficient physical activity leads to weight gain and potentially obesity, an important risk factor for cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Context

Sugar is present in foods and beverages as a natural part of some ingredients. Sugar is also added for its sweetening properties and for technical reasons such as to provide texture, structure, colour and flavour to a product or to help preserve it. As sweetness is one of the basic taste sensations, sugar plays an important role in enjoyment and pleasure of the product for the consumer.

Sugar is added to some Unilever products, such as powdered and ready-to-drink iced teas, ice creams, breakfast cereals and certain dressings and sauces.

Unilever's position

Sugar plays an important role in our products by providing sweetness but also structural properties in the case of ice cream. We want to ensure that we use sugar responsibly, whilst matching technical needs and consumer preferences.

We support the position that energy intake from sugar should be limited in line with recommendations by a number of organisations, such as the World Health Organization and the American Heart Association. This is explicitly recognised in our Unilever Sustainable Living Plan targets.





Most concern is oriented towards 'free' sugars, which includes added sugar and sugar from juices and concentrates, but does not include sugar found naturally and consumed in intact fruits and vegetables and in dairy.

As part of the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan, we are taking the following steps to offer consumers products with less sugar and fewer calories, for example:

- We have committed to double the proportion of our portfolio that meets the highest nutritional standards by 2020. These highest nutritional standards include benchmarks for salt, saturated fat, sugar and calories.
- We are reducing sugar levels in our ready-to-drink teas to achieve our goal of removing 25% sugar by 2020. We have now extended this commitment to our powdered ice tea and milk tea products.
- In 2014 we fulfilled our commitment to ensure that all our children's ice cream brands were 110 calories or less per serving.*
- We have extended our commitments to our broader ice cream portfolio and, by 2015, 80% of our packaged ice cream products will not exceed 250 kilocalories per portion.**
- Furthermore, we have launched low calorie ice tea powder mixes and concentrates, ready-to-drink ice teas and portion controlled ice creams to offer great tasting choices with less sugar and fewer calories.
- In addition, we have a global commitment to clear, simple nutrition labelling to enable healthy food choices.

We focus on beverages and ice cream because that is where we can have the biggest impact on sugar reduction and therefore public health.

Many consumers like a certain sweetness in foods and beverages. We are able to reduce the overall sugar level and maintain consumer preference to a certain extent. To reduce sugar further we can add sweetness by replacing sugar (fully or partially) with non-nutritive sweeteners. Approved non-nutritive sweeteners are safe for use in foods and beverages when consumed at allowed levels. Their use in place of sugar mitigates the risk of excess energy intakes associated with sugar.





*Our children's ice cream portfolio encompasses the Max, Paddlepop and Popsicle brands as well as some desserts created for children.

** Portion is defined as: pre-packed single-serve ice cream products meant to be consumed in one-go or 100 ml when sold in packaging aimed at multi consumption moments such as tubs.

