

Sugar could be harmful to our health

12th January, 2016



Governments in the United States and United Kingdom are waging a war on sugar in the interests of public health. Both countries claim that the overconsumption of

sugar by much of the population is detrimental to people's well-being. On Thursday, the U.S. government issued new dietary guidelines that strongly recommend people receive less than 10 per cent of their daily calorie intake from added sugar. On the same day, British Prime Minister David Cameron said he has not ruled out the idea of a tax on sugar to encourage consumers to buy food with reduced levels of the sweet stuff. Politicians in the U.K. are debating how a reduction in the intake of sugar could help alleviate Britain's rising rates of obesity.

The American and British governments both cite a study conducted in Mexico that showed a tax on sugary, carbonated drinks led to a reduction in consumption. The tax was implemented on January 1, 2014 and purchases of the taxed beverages went down by 12 per cent by December of that year. Sales of mineral water increased by four per cent over the same period. An alternative to taxing sugared drinks is to reduce the level of sugar in them. Researchers at Queen Mary University in London say that reducing the sugar content in sugar-sweetened drinks by 40 per cent over five years could prevent one million cases of obesity in the U.K. Researchers say people might not even notice the changes.

Sources: *TheAtlantic.com* / *ScienceAlert.com* / *lfpres.com*

Writing

There should be a health tax on all food with sugar. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

war / sugar / public health / population / well-being / encourage / consumers / obesity / study / sugary / carbonated drinks / mineral water / one million / obesity / changes

True / False

- Governments from two countries are fighting a war on sugar. T / F
- Both countries say all citizens consume too much sugar. T / F
- The USA said sugar makes up 10% of the average citizen's calories. T / F
- Britain's leader has agreed to a tax on sugar. T / F
- A tax on sugary drinks in Mexico led to an increase in consumption. T / F
- Sales of mineral water in Mexico increased by 4% in 2014. T / F
- A London university recommends cutting the amount of sugar in drinks. T / F
- Researchers say people might not notice a reduction in sugar levels. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. waging | a. substitute |
| 2. claim | b. reduce |
| 3. detrimental | c. assert |
| 4. recommend | d. instances |
| 5. alleviate | e. quote |
| 6. cite | f. engaging in |
| 7. implemented | g. amount |
| 8. alternative | h. urge |
| 9. content | i. put into effect |
| 10. cases | j. harmful |

Discussion – Student A

- Should governments put a health warning on sugary drinks?
- How addictive do you think sugar is?
- What's the difference between white and brown sugar?
- What do you think of artificial sweeteners and other sugar substitutes?
- Would you notice if there was less sugar in food?
- How would food taste if sugar was completely banned?
- Could you live without sugar or do you have a sweet tooth?
- What would you like to ask the boss of a sugar company?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. waging a war | a. well-being |
| 2. in the interests | b. sweetened drinks |
| 3. detrimental to people's | c. the same period |
| 4. Cameron said he has not ruled | d. rates of obesity |
| 5. alleviate Britain's rising | e. notice the changes |
| 6. The tax was implemented | f. cases of obesity |
| 7. increased by four per cent over | g. on sugar |
| 8. reducing the sugar content in sugar- | h. on January 1, 2014 |
| 9. prevent one million | i. of public health |
| 10. people might not even | j. out the idea of a tax on sugar |

Discussion – Student B

- Is your sugar intake too high?
- How healthy or unhealthy is sugar?
- How important are carbonated drinks to you?
- What can governments do to educate people about sugar?
- Could you easily reduce your sugar intake?
- Should parents stop giving babies sweet things?
- What do you think of a sugar tax?
- How can we reduce rates of obesity?

Spelling

- edttmrelain to people's well-being
- new ritdyea guidelines
- strongly eommedcnr people receive less
- caenogure consumers to buy food
- a rtniedocu in the intake of sugar
- llviaeeta Britain's rising rates of obesity
- adotbcenar drinks
- The tax was meneltpmied on January 1
- purchases of the taxed agrveeesb
- An eltavtriena to taxing sugared drinks
- sugar-tseweende drinks
- people might not even oneitc the changes

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. c	3. j	4. h	5. b
6. e	7. i	8. a	9. g	10. d

Role Play

Role A – Carbonated drinks

You think carbonated drinks are the worst thing for your health. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful of these (and why): chocolate, cotton candy or lollipops.

Role B – Chocolate

You think chocolate is the worst thing for your health. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful of these (and why): carbonated drinks, cotton candy or lollipops.

Role C – Cotton candy

You think cotton candy is the worst thing for your health. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful of these (and why): chocolate, carbonated drinks or lollipops.

Role D – Lollipops

You think lollipops are the worst thing for your health. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful of these (and why): chocolate, cotton candy or carbonated drinks.

Speaking – Sugary

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- cereal
- carbonated drinks
- ice cream
- chocolate
- donuts
- candy floss / cotton candy
- lollipops
- jam

Answers – True False

a T	b F	c F	d F	e F	f T	g T	h T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.