

New campaign launched to help parents improve children's diet

- New Better Health campaign launches today to help families eat better, with new NHS Food Scanner App feature offering healthier alternatives
- Former 'Girls Aloud' member Nadine Coyle, dietician Dr Linia Patel and a Netmums family test the app in a new film supporting the campaign
- 60% of parents say they are giving their children more sugary or fatty snacks than before the pandemic

Families will be given support to help to improve the diets of their children through a new campaign as the new statistics reveal the number of parents giving unhealthy snacks to their children has increased during the pandemic.

The multimedia Better Health campaign has been launched today [Monday January 10] to encourage families to eat better and includes a new 'scan, swipe and swap' feature for the NHS Food Scanner App, which provides a simple solution to help families maintain a healthier diet.

The campaign follows a record rise in obesity amongst children since the start of the pandemic, [with latest data highlighting](#) that one in four (27.7%) children of reception school age are overweight or obese; this rises to 4 in 10 (40.9%) in Year 6 (ages 10-11). [Evidence shows](#) that families purchased food more during lockdowns and this remained above normal levels even once lockdowns ended.

A [new survey conducted with Netmums](#) showed that nearly 6 in 10 (58%) parents give their children more sugary or fatty snacks than before the pandemic and nearly two-thirds (64%) of parents said they often worry about how healthy their children's snacks really are. Nearly 90% of parents said they would benefit from an App which would help them make healthier choices for their children.

Families can scan the product barcodes from their shop and the app will suggest healthier alternatives to help them make an easy swap next time they shop. The app uses a "Good Choice" badge to help signpost people to healthier food and drinks in line with the government's dietary recommendations for added sugar, saturated fat and salt.

Public Health Minister Maggie Throup said:

We know that families have felt a lot of pressure throughout the pandemic which has drastically changed habits and routines

The new year is a good time for making resolutions, not just for ourselves, but for our families. Finding ways to improve their health is one of the best resolutions any of us could make.

By downloading the free NHS Food Scanner App, families can swap out

foods from the weekly shop for healthier alternatives and avoid items high in salt, sugar and saturated fat.

Dr Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at DHSC said:

We are all aware of the increased pressures families have been under throughout the pandemic with children being stuck at home more. With advertising promoting unhealthy foods to kids, it's not surprising that parents say they've often found it hard to resist pestering from their children for more unhealthy snacks, and that is why the NHS Food Scanner App is a great tool to help families make quick and easy healthier swaps.

It's so important that children reduce the amount of sugary, fatty and salty foods they eat to help them stay healthy and reduce the risk of health problems such as diabetes and tooth decay.

'Girls Aloud' member Nadine Coyle and dietician Dr Linia Patel met with a family to talk about eating habits and to trial the NHS Food Scanner App for themselves, and [recorded a short film to support the campaign](#).

Nadine Coyle said:

As a busy working mum, I find it hard to say no to my kid's demands and often give in to "snack" pressure – even though I know it's not that good for them. I had no idea some foods were so high in sugar, saturated fat and salt – so it's great that the App gives you alternatives.

I love using the NHS Food Scanner App and so does my daughter; she likes choosing the healthier swaps which is great – we are already making small changes through good food choices.

Dr Linia Patel, Dietician said:

We know that parents find it really hard to find healthier snacks for their kids, especially if they're fussy eaters.

The NHS Food Scanner App is a fun way to get the kids involved in choosing healthier foods that they'll love – so get going and scan, swipe, swap!

Annie O'Leary, Netmums Editorial Director said:

That two thirds of parents find they're giving kids more treats as snacks than pre-pandemic doesn't surprise me in the slightest – we

all comfort ate our way through the pandemic and I know my kids ate far more treats than usual.

But thank heavens there's now something to help get us all back on track. And that it's from the gold standard in terms of trustworthiness, the NHS, hopefully means millions of families will be downloading it and using it ASAP.

Shopping for snacks can be an absolute minefield for busy parents, so thank you for coming to the rescue yet again, NHS.

As part of the Government's Obesity Strategy, the department is regulating the promotion of less healthy foods to children and has dedicated £100m of funding to support children, adults and families achieve and maintain a healthier weight.

The NHS Food Scanner App provides parents with the ideal hack to improve their children's health in 2022. The free App [can be downloaded](#) or search 'Food Scanner App'.

- Link to [full campaign film and assets](#)
- [Netmums surveyed](#) 2,030 parents with children aged 5-11 years old, conducted between 7th-17th December 2020,
- Running throughout England from 10th January to 31st March, the campaign will include new advertising on TV, video on demand, radio, out of home, media partnerships, social media and other digital channels, together with national and regional PR activity.
- The new TV ad brings the swaps to life by presenting the Food Scanner App as the simple solution to help parents find healthier swaps for their families.
- Primary teachers will also be able to help pupils learn about making healthier food choices using a range of fun curriculum linked [teaching resources](#) that feature the NHS Food Scanner App.
- The 'Good Choice' badge* helps signpost consumers to healthier food and drinks that meet nutrient criteria in line the Government's dietary recommendations for added sugar, saturated fat and salt.
- NHS Digital [National Child Measurement programme England 2020/2021](#)
- The dietary impact of the COVID-19 pandemic [report](#)
- [Government Obesity Strategy](#)