

# News story: Plans to cut excess calorie consumption unveiled

Major steps to cut people's excessive calorie intake have been unveiled by Public Health England (PHE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), as part of the government's strategy to cut childhood and adult obesity.

The package includes:

- new evidence highlighting overweight or obese boys and girls consume up to 500 and 290 calories too many each day respectively
- a challenge to the food industry to reduce calories in products consumed by families by 20% by 2024
- the launch of the latest One You campaign, encouraging adults to consume 400 calories at breakfast, and 600 for lunch and dinner. This comes as adults consume 200 to 300 calories in excess each day

Too many children and most adults are overweight or obese, suffering consequences from bullying and low self-esteem in childhood, to type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers as adults. An obese parent is more likely to have an obese child, who in turn is more likely to grow up into an obese adult.

Obesity affects us all, as it is a burden on the NHS and local authorities. The NHS spends around £6 billion a year treating obesity-related conditions. Obesity-related health problems also keep people out of work, stifling their earnings and wider economic productivity.

The government's challenge to the food industry is set out in *Calorie reduction: the scope and ambition for action*, published today, Tuesday 6 March 2018, by PHE. As with the [sugar reduction programme](#), the industry has 3 ways to reduce calories:

- change the recipe of products
- reduce portion size
- encourage consumers to purchase lower calorie products

Categories of food covered by the programme include pizzas, ready meals, ready-made sandwiches, meat products and savoury snacks.

If the 20% target is met within 5 years, more than 35,000 premature deaths could be prevented and around £9 billion in NHS healthcare and social care costs could be saved over a 25 year period.

The report also includes new data on children's daily calorie consumption. Depending on their age, overweight and obese boys consume between 140 to 500 calories too many each day and for girls, it is 160 to 290 when compared to those with healthy body weights. Adults consume on average 200 to 300 calories too many each day.

Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of PHE, said:

The simple truth is on average we need to eat less. Children and adults routinely eat too many calories and it's why so many are overweight or obese.

Industry can help families by finding innovative ways to lower the calories in the food we all enjoy and promoting UK business leadership on the world stage in tackling obesity.

Steve Brine MP, Public Health and Social Care Minister, said:

There can be no doubt that obesity is now one of our greatest challenges – one that is fuelling an epidemic of preventable illnesses like type 2 diabetes and cancer. These not only shorten lives but put unsustainable pressure on our health service.

We have a responsibility to act, which is why we are supporting families to make the healthy choice. Our calorie reduction programme – the first of its kind from any country in the world – will continue to build on the progress of our world-leading childhood obesity plan, which has led to positive steps by industry.

The latest One You campaign aims to support people to be more calorie-aware when they are out and about with its simple tip 400-600-600. Aim for 400 calories at breakfast, and 600 for lunch and dinner. Major high street brands are partnering with PHE on the campaign, signposting to meals that meet the 400-600-600 tip. Total daily calorie intake recommendations remain at 2,000 for women and 2,500 for men.

Dr Alison Tedstone, chief nutritionist at PHE, said:

It's hard for people to make healthy food choices, whether for themselves or their families. That's why we are challenging the food industry to take 20% of the calories out of everyday foods, building on their good work on salt and promising announcements on sugar.

We are also working through our campaign and its partners, to give the public the information they need to help make those choices easier.

The 20% reduction target is the result of analysis of the new calorie consumption data, experience of sugar and salt reduction programmes, and more than 20 meetings with the food industry and stakeholders.

The next step in the programme involves engagement with the whole food industry such as retailers, manufacturers, major restaurant, café, takeaway, and delivery companies, and health and charity sectors, to develop category guidelines. These will be published in mid-2019.

## **Background**

For further information on the calorie reduction programme and One You nutrition campaign please contact:

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