

Promotions of unhealthy foods restricted from October 2022

- Restrictions will apply to medium and large retailers
- Measures form a key part of the government's strategy to tackle obesity and get the nation fit and healthy

Promotions on food and drinks high in fat salt or sugar (HFSS) in retailers will be restricted from October 2022, the government has confirmed today [Wednesday 21 July 2021].

Regulations will be laid in Parliament that will require medium and large businesses, including those with 50 or more employees, to phase out their offering of multibuy promotions such as "buy one get one free" or "3 for 2" offers on HFSS products.

Less healthy promotions will also no longer be featured in key locations, such as checkouts, store entrances, aisle ends and their online equivalents. Free refills of sugary soft drinks will also be prohibited in the eating-out sector.

Today's announcement follows consultation with industry and the government has considered industry's feedback and has made the decision to extend the implementation date of this policy – from April 2022 to October 2022 – to allow businesses enough time to prepare for these restrictions.

The government will continue to work with businesses, trade associations and local authorities to ensure they are supported in implementing the new requirements ahead of them coming into force. This will include sharing draft guidance with industry and local authorities to provide further clarity on how these restrictions will need to be implemented in practice.

As part of the regulations, the government will provide local authorities with the option of issuing civil penalties for non-compliance with the promotions restrictions.

These measures will support people in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight and improve the nation's health. Over 25 years, these measures are estimated to accrue combined health benefits of approximately £60 million, according to the value that society places on changes in the quality and length of people's lives as a result of fewer cases of obesity. They will make supermarkets and other retailers places where the healthier choice is the easy choice for everyone and support people to lead healthier lives.

Public Health Minister Jo Churchill, said:

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the impact that an unhealthy weight can have on people's health. We know families want the healthy choice to be the easy choice, and restricting

promotions on unhealthy foods will help them achieve this.

We want to support everyone to eat healthier foods more regularly and this starts with helping supermarkets and manufacturers promote healthier food choices lower or free from HFSS, to support families to make healthier choices.

These restrictions will come into force from October 2022. I look forward to working together with everyone to ensure that for families a healthy option is the easy option when shopping.

Obesity is one of the biggest health crises the country faces as almost two-thirds (63%) of adults in England are overweight or living with obesity and 1 in 3 children leave primary school overweight or obese. Obesity-related illnesses cost the NHS £6 billion a year.

Further action as part of the government's obesity strategy to get the nation fit and healthy will see the introduction of mandatory calorie labelling in restaurants, cafes and takeaways from April 2022 and restrictions for the advertising of HFSS products being shown on TV before 9pm and online coming into force at the end of 2022.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- There is a two-stage process to define what products are captured by the promotions restrictions. This two-step process ensures the restrictions apply to the products of most concern to childhood obesity whilst allowing the healthiest products within categories to be excluded. First the products will only be subject to the restrictions if they are in a narrowed set of categories listed in regulations. If a product falls into one of these categories, then the second stage is to apply the 2004/05 Nutrient profiling Model (NPM). If a food products scores 4 or above or a drink product scores 1 or above it will be considered as HFSS and not able to be promoted.
- The government's Impact Assessment for the promotions policy can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/restricting-promotions-of-food-and-drink-that-is-high-in-fat-sugar-and-salt>