

Public consultation: sugars in food

EFSA is seeking feedback on the approach it plans to take for its upcoming assessment of dietary sugars. The aim of the assessment is to establish a cut-off value for intake of “free” sugars that is not associated with adverse health effects.

EFSA’s Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies (NDA) has drafted a protocol to define the methods for:

- collecting data (i.e. which data to use for the assessment and how to identify and select them);
- appraising the relevant evidence; and
- analysing and integrating the evidence to draw conclusions that will form the basis of the scientific opinion.

Dominique Turck, Chair of EFSA’s NDA Panel, said: “This is an important and complex piece of work, which is why we want to give our stakeholders and members of the public the opportunity to comment on our approach before we start the assessment.

“We are looking forward to receiving comments and suggestions from across the scientific community that will help us to optimise both the transparency and the methodological rigour of this assessment.”

Interested parties can [submit comments on the protocol](#) until 4 March 2018.

EFSA is also holding a technical meeting in Brussels on 13 February to discuss the methodology that will be used in the assessment. [Registration for the event](#) is now open.

Background

Free sugars comprise monosaccharides (glucose, fructose, galactose) and disaccharides (sucrose, lactose, maltose, trehalose) added to foods by manufacturers or consumers plus sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juices, and fruit juice concentrates.

The health effects under consideration will include micronutrient intake and status, body weight and obesity, glucose homeostasis and type-2 diabetes, cardiovascular risk factors and diseases, liver function and dental caries.

The advice – requested by the national food authorities of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – will help Member States to establish recommendations on the consumption of free sugars and to plan food-based dietary guidelines.

In 2010, EFSA provided advice on dietary reference values (DRVs) for carbohydrates and dietary fibre, which included sugar. At the time, the available evidence was insufficient to set an upper limit for the daily intake of total or added sugars.