

Sugar Tax

An ongoing debate for years within the British government has been about whether or not to create a sugar tax in Britain. But do people know enough about what a sugar tax is?

The sugar tax is an initiative that the British government has been talking about for many years. The idea is to bring in a tax to food and drink that have added sugar in them. This is meant to discourage people from buying and eating these products. This came after a report by the PHE (Public Health England) stating that the amount of children that are obese is worrying with 10% of 4-5 year olds and 19% of 10-11 year olds being obese in England in October 2015. In Scotland in 2014 17% of children aged 2-15 were at the risk of obesity and with a further 14% at risk of becoming overweight. Since 1998 the risk of obesity has fluctuated and is now between 31% and 33% in 2015.

At the moment the government only adds the sugar tax in the shops/cafes that are owned by the NHS or that are located in their hospitals. The government are thinking of aiming for a wider use of the sugar tax in all shops and cafes. The people that are supporting the sugar tax are the Scottish government and the English government and TV chef and healthy eating campaigner Jamie Oliver who is behind the cause. He started a petition to add tax of 7p for a normal size can of juice and it gained more than 120,256 signatures in just a week. Supporting the cause Jamie Oliver believes the move could generate 1 billion a year to help cure childhood obesity.

As well as bringing the sugar tax Jamie Oliver and Health officials would also like to ban junk food advertisements before nine o'clock and restrict the use of celebrities to promote unhealthy products. Another big change that Jamie Oliver wants to make is to stop shops doing special offers such as 2 for 1 or buy one get one half price on sugary food or drinks. To warn people of the amount of sugar in their drinks, they want to put warning labels telling you how many spoonfuls of sugar are in the drink.

There's a debate about whether there should be a sugar tax. The people in favour are 54% of parents surveyed by the Daily Mail, they think that sugar tax is a good idea and will encourage them to eat and buy less. Another survey conducted by ITV with the age group ranging between 18-50 year olds, had almost 50% agreeing with the tax on fizzy drinks but almost three-quarters of the people thought that the extra money should go to charity's/scheme that would improve children's health.

Those that support the sugar tax think it's a good idea because the amount of people with obesity is rising from a young age and will more likely affect their children in the future. There might be a little bit of a problem when a sugar tax becomes official, the price of sweets and fizzy drinks will rise by 10 to 20%. This could make a massive impact on families that buy and consume sugary drinks and food regularly. However the tax will become a norm which will eradicate the reason behind the reason behind the sugar tax.

A quick survey on the pupils at West Calder High School asked “Do you know what a sugar tax is?” The results came back showing that not many people knew what the sugar tax is.

Year group	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
Yes	8	4	17	3	9	18
No	84	60	98	42	12	25

This shows us that young people don't know as much as they should about the sugar tax even though added sugar is largely affecting young people. Healthy eating would be supported by a sugar tax. The importance of it could be covered in PSE lessons or covered in primary school health and wellbeing lessons.

Report by Kathryn and Julie



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