



SUGAR TAX NOW INSTALLED

On 6 April 2018 the British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT) released a statement in response to the official introduction of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy, or tax on drinks with high sugar content.

The levy will tax the soft drinks industry for total sugar content over 5 g per 100 ml and is estimated to raise around £520 million a year, which will be spent on increasing sport funding in primary schools.

Manufacturers of soft drinks will be taxed on the volume they produce or import. Drinks will fall into two bands: one for total sugar content over 5 g per 100 ml, and a second band for drinks with more than 8 g per 100 ml.

The BSDHT said: 'In order to tackle the growing epidemic of poor oral health among children in the UK, we need collaboration and dedication between healthcare associations, dental and medical societies, and government bodies. We need to work together if we are to raise

awareness of the dangers of sugar among the general population and encourage children, their parents/guardians and those who care for them to put their health first.

'The sugar tax is a welcome first step in this fight, helping to highlight some of the products with the highest sugar content while also motivating some of the manufacturing companies to find lower-sugar alternatives. There is also hope that the price rise will provide something of a financial deterrent for children looking for a cold drink or snack.

'However, much more needs to be done if we are to turn the currently appalling figures around. The tax only covers certain child-friendly food and drink, with many others slipping through the net. Education is key if we are to help more children avoid excessive decay in the future – they and their carers need to be aware of all hidden sugars.

'The BSDHT remains one of many organisations committed to making a difference to the health of our young

generation. Its First Smiles campaign is designed specifically to encourage professionals to build relationships with their local schools and nurseries so that they may provide the information, advice and tools that children need to instil good habits from an early age. Many participants are using this opportunity to teach children about the effects of sugar on their health and we would welcome everyone to get involved.

BSPD

The British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) also welcomed the sugar tax. President Claire Stevens commented: 'We would like to see clearer labelling of food and drink products and greater investment in advice and information to families on nutrition. A range of ongoing measures is the only way to reduce the burden of dental decay in children and young people.

'Most of the mainstream stores and supermarkets are now banning our other bugbear, high energy drinks. Now the Government must step in and legislate to ban sales of these high caffeine drinks everywhere. Unless the government takes action, young people will simply buy these drinks at corner shops. The war on both high sugar and high energy drinks has to be ongoing. They should have no place in the diets of children and young people.'

Oral Health Foundation

The Oral Health Foundation said that the sugar tax does not go far enough in addressing Britain's current dental health crisis which has been largely caused by sugar.

Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive, said: 'Tooth decay is the number one reason why children have a general anaesthetic in hospital in England. The Local Government Association (LGA) have recorded that there were nearly 43,000 hospital operations to remove unhealthy teeth in children in the last year alone. It is an utterly heart-breaking situation and something no child should go through.

'The government have somewhat ignored this when they developed the sugar tax and have failed millions of children by not recognising and reacting effectively enough to the risk posed to their oral health by sugary drinks.'

The Oral Health Foundation is also disappointed that government seem to have turned a blind eye to the sugar content in pure fruit juices, milk-based drinks and multi-packs.