

BDA says food industry is walking parents down garden path

The British Dental Association (BDA) said in November that government must stamp out misleading marketing claims by children's food manufacturers, in response to damning new research from Action on Sugar.

Latest findings show breakfast foods aimed at toddlers contain up to four teaspoons of sugar per serving. Over three quarters of products claim to have 'no added sugars' or 'only naturally occurring sugars' despite many containing sugars from fruit juices, concentrates and purees – all of which are harmful to dental health.

Earlier this year, a BDA study of 109 baby pouches aimed at children aged under 12 months found over a quarter contained more sugar by volume than Coca Cola,¹ with parents of infants as young as four months being marketed pouches that contain the equivalent of up to 150% of the sugar levels of the soft drink.

The BDA backs sweeping action on food marketing and labelling, including the complete removal of misleading nutrition and health claims on baby and toddler food and drink products and ensuring



dedicated baby aisles in supermarkets are a 'safe space' for parents.

BDA Chair Eddie Crouch said: 'The food industry is walking parents down the garden path, pushing sugar-laden products as "healthy options".'

'Claims of "no added sugar" are utterly meaningless when toddlers are receiving four teaspoons over breakfast.

'Tooth decay is the number one reason for hospital admission among young

children, and Ministers can't remain bystanders. Action here is a prerequisite if we're ever going to turn the tables on wholly preventable diseases.'

Reference

1. British Dental Association. Dentists call for sweeping action on baby pouches. 8 July 2022. Available at: <https://bda.org/news-centre/latest-news-articles/Pages/Dentists-call-for-sweeping-action-on-baby-pouches.aspx> (accessed November 2022).

BASCD release updated position statement for Sugar Awareness Week

On 14 November, the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry (BASCD) launched their 'Position statement on recommended actions to reduce the consumption of free sugars and improve oral health' (2022 edition) to coincide with the first day of Sugar Awareness Week, which BASCD proudly supports.

Charlotte Jeavons, BASCD Lead for Oral Health Improvement, said: 'We are pleased to launch our position statement on actions to reduce consumption of free sugars to coincide with the beginning of Sugar Awareness Week 2022. As a nation we consume far too much sugar with consequences of obesity and poor oral health within our population. This statement provides achievable actions to reduce consumption and the costs associated with

poor health. We challenge those in power to help us take action and redress the balance.'

The 2022 position statement has been informed by a qualitative evaluation of the 2016 edition and updated to reflect current evidence. The statement provides BASCD guidance to advocate for awareness and improvement of health in respect to sugar. BASCD hopes that this will encourage dental teams and the wider dental/public health workforce to support and advocate for the awareness and improvement of health in respect to sugar. The statement reflects BASCD's continued commitment to supporting a broad range of actions that have been proposed by expert bodies, including:

- Lowering the amount of free sugars in foods and drinks

- Restricting the marketing and promotion of sugar-containing products
- Reducing the amount of sugar-containing food and drinks sold
- Advising, educating, and helping people to consume less sugar
- Reducing the amount of sugar produced.

Louisa Polglass, Specialty Trainee in Dental Public Health, said: 'There is a huge amount of research and evidence that reveals the impact of excess sugar consumption on our health and wellbeing. BASCD has recognised the harm caused by sugar and are proud to support the launch of this position statement and continue to challenge the sugar industry.'

<https://www.bascd.org/about-bascd/bascd-2022-statement-on-free-sugars-is-launched/>