



Impuestos a las bebidas azucaradas pueden reducir el consumo: OMS

[Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social](#) > Impuestos a las bebidas azucaradas pueden reducir el consumo: OMS

Los impuestos a las bebidas azucaradas pueden reducir el consumo de estos alimentos

12/10/2016

Boletín de Prensa No 218 de 2016

- *Un documento de la Organización Mundial de la Salud concluye que estos gravámenes contribuyen a la reducción de la obesidad, la diabetes y la caries.*

Bogotá, 11 de octubre de 2016.- Los impuestos a las bebidas azucaradas pueden reducir el consumo de estos alimentos y, por esta vía, la obesidad, la diabetes tipo 2 y la caries.

Esa es la conclusión de la Organización Mundial de la Salud en el documento Políticas fiscales para la dieta y la prevención de enfermedades no transmisibles, en el que se plantea que las políticas fiscales que buscan un incremento del 20% en el precio de venta de las bebidas azucaradas podrían traducirse en reducciones proporcionales en el consumo de estos productos.

El comunicado emitido por la organización señala que la reducción del consumo de bebidas azucaradas significa una mejor nutrición y una menor ingesta de azúcares libres y calorías.

Los azúcares libres son los monosacáridos (glucosa y fructosa), los disacáridos (sacarosa o el azúcar de mesa) que productores, cocineros o consumidores agregan a las comidas y las bebidas, así como los azúcares presentes de manera natural en la miel, los jarabes, los jugos de fruta y los concentrados de fruta.

“Si los gobiernos gravan productos como las bebidas azucaradas, pueden reducir los padecimientos y salvar vidas –comentó en la página web de la organización Douglas

Bettcher, director del Departamento de Prevención de Enfermedades No Transmisibles de la OMS—. También pueden reducir los costos de la salud y aumentar ingresos para invertir en servicios de salud”.

Los expertos de la OMS afirman que, desde un punto de vista nutricional, la gente no necesita azúcar en su dieta, y plantean que si se consume no debe ser superior al 10% del total de las necesidades energéticas.

El reporte plantea asimismo que las bebidas y las comidas altas en azúcares libres pueden ser la mayor fuente de calorías innecesarias en la dieta de las personas, particularmente en el caso de los niños, los adolescentes y los adultos jóvenes.

También resalta que las personas que viven en países de bajos ingresos, las personas jóvenes y los consumidores habituales de estos alimentos responden de mejor manera a los cambios en los precios de estas bebidas y, consecuentemente, pueden ser los mayores beneficiarios en términos de salud.

Evidencia recogida por el reporte señala que el apoyo público a estos impuestos puede incrementarse si los ingresos que generan son destinados para la mejora de los sistemas de salud, a estimular dietas saludables y a incrementar la actividad física.

Algunas cifras de la OMS

- En 2014, el 39% de los adultos en el mundo tenían sobrepeso.
- Entre 1980 y 2014, la obesidad en el mundo se duplicó.
- Más de 1.500 millones de adultos en el mundo son obesos.
- El número de personas con diabetes en el mundo aumentó de 108 millones en 1980 a 422 millones en 2014.

WHO urges global action to curtail consumption and health impacts of sugary drinks

News release

11 OCTOBER 2016 | GENEVA - Taxing sugary drinks can lower consumption and reduce obesity, type 2 diabetes and tooth decay, says a new WHO report.

Fiscal policies that lead to at least a 20% increase in the retail price of sugary drinks would result in proportional reductions in consumption of such products, according to the report titled “*Fiscal policies for Diet and Prevention of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs)*”.

Reduced consumption of sugary drinks means lower intake of “free sugars” and calories overall, improved nutrition and fewer people suffering from overweight, obesity, diabetes and tooth decay.

Free sugars refer to monosaccharides (such as glucose or fructose) and disaccharides (such as sucrose or table sugar) added to foods and drinks by the manufacturer, cook, or consumer, and sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juices, and fruit juice concentrates.

Obesity on the rise

“Consumption of free sugars, including products like sugary drinks, is a major factor in the global increase of people suffering from obesity and diabetes,” says Dr Douglas Bettcher, Director of WHO’s Department for the Prevention of NCDs. “If governments tax products like sugary drinks, they can reduce suffering and save lives. They can also cut healthcare costs and increase revenues to invest in health services.”

In 2014, more than 1 in 3 (39%) adults worldwide aged 18 years and older were overweight. Worldwide prevalence of obesity more than doubled between 1980 and 2014, with 11% of men and 15% of women (more than half a billion adults) being classified as obese.

- [Fact sheet on obesity and overweight](#)

In addition, an estimated 42 million children aged under 5 years were overweight or obese in 2015, an increase of about 11 million during the past 15 years. Almost half (48%) of these children lived in Asia and 25% in Africa.

The number of people living with diabetes has also been rising, from 108 million in 1980 to 422 million in 2014. The disease was directly responsible for 1.5 million deaths in 2012 alone.

Need to reduce sugar intake

“Nutritionally, people don’t need any sugar in their diet. WHO recommends that if people do consume free sugars, they keep their intake below 10% of their total energy needs, and reduce it to less than 5% for additional health benefits. This is equivalent to less than a single serving (at least 250 ml) of commonly consumed sugary drinks per day,” says Dr Francesco Branca, Director of WHO’s Department of Nutrition for Health and Development.

According to the new WHO report, national dietary surveys indicate that drinks and foods high in free sugars can be a major source of unnecessary calories in people’s diets, particularly in the case of children, adolescents and young adults.

It also points out that some groups, including people living on low incomes, young people and those who frequently consume unhealthy foods and beverages, are most responsive to changes in prices of drinks and foods and, therefore, gain the highest health benefits.

Using fiscal policies to reduce consumption

Fiscal policies should target foods and beverages for which healthier alternatives are available, the report adds.

The report presents outcomes of a mid-2015 meeting of global experts convened by WHO and an investigation of 11 recent systematic reviews of the effectiveness of fiscal policy interventions for improving diets and preventing NCDs and a technical meeting of global experts. Other findings include:

- Subsidies for fresh fruits and vegetables that reduce prices by 10–30% can increase fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Taxation of certain foods and drinks, particularly those high in saturated fats, trans fat, free sugars and/or salt appears promising, with existing evidence clearly showing that increases in the prices of such products reduces their consumption.

- Excise taxes, such as those used on tobacco products, that apply a set (specific) amount of tax on a given quantity or volume of the product, or particular ingredient, are likely to be more effective than sales or other taxes based on a percentage of the retail price.
- Public support for such tax increases could be increased if the revenue they generate is earmarked for efforts to improve health systems, encourage healthier diets and increase physical activity.

A number of countries have taken fiscal measures to protect people from unhealthy products. These include Mexico, which has implemented an excise tax on non-alcoholic beverages with added sugar, and Hungary, which has imposed a tax on packaged products with high sugars, salt or caffeine levels. Countries, such as the Philippines, South Africa and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have also announced intentions to implement taxes on sugary drinks.

Notes to editors:

As part of comprehensive policy measures to improve health, WHO calls on governments to use fiscal measures in its “*Global Action Plan on the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013–2020*”, the “*Comprehensive Implementation Plan on Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition*” and more recently by the WHO Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity.

In 2012, 38 million people lost their lives due to NCDs, 16 million or 42% of whom died prematurely – before 70 years – from largely avoidable conditions. More than 80% of people who died prematurely from a NCD were in developing countries. Governments had committed to reduce deaths from NCDs, and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda includes a target to reduce premature deaths from diabetes, cancers, heart, and lung diseases by one-third by 2030.

At the Second International Conference on Nutrition in 2014, governments committed to reshape food systems, and this is the main goal of the recently declared UN Decade of Action of Nutrition 2016-2025.