



# News Release

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## 10 year olds in the UK have consumed 18 years' worth of sugar

- The latest Change4Life campaign is asking parents to “*Make a swap when you next shop*” to halve their children’s sugar intake from some everyday food and drinks.
- Children are currently consuming around 2,800 extra sugar cubes per year.

Children have already exceeded the maximum recommended sugar intake for an 18 year old by the time they reach their tenth birthday, according to Public Health England (PHE)<sup>1</sup>. This is based on their total sugar consumption from the age of two.

This figure comes as a new Change4Life campaign launches today, supporting families to cut back on sugar and to help tackle growing rates of childhood obesity.

While children’s sugar intakes have declined slightly in recent years, they are still consuming around 8 excess sugar cubes each day<sup>2</sup>, equivalent to around 2,800 excess sugar cubes per year.

To help parents manage this, Change4Life is encouraging them to “*Make a swap when you next shop*”. Making simple everyday swaps can reduce children’s sugar intake from some products (yoghurts, drinks and breakfast cereals) by half – while giving them healthier versions of the foods and drinks they enjoy.

Parents can try swapping:

- a higher-sugar yoghurt (e.g. split-pot) for a lower sugar one, to halve their sugar intake **from 6 cubes of sugar to 3**;
- a sugary juice drink for a no-added sugar juice drink, to cut back **from 2 cubes to half a cube**;
- a higher-sugar breakfast cereal (e.g. a frosted or chocolate cereal) for a lower sugar cereal, to cut back **from 3 cubes to half a cube per bowl**.

While some foods and drinks remain high in sugar, many companies have reformulated products such as yoghurts, breakfast cereals and juice drinks, meaning these swaps are a good place for families to start. Making these swaps every day could remove around 2,500 sugar cubes per year from a child’s diet, but swapping chocolate, puddings, sweets, cakes and pastries for healthier

<sup>1</sup> PHE collects data on children’s sugar intakes from the age of two through its National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS): <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/ndns-results-from-years-7-and-8-combined>. The average 10 year old has already consumed at least 138 kilos of sugar; if children were to keep their consumption within the maximum recommended sugar intake after the age of 2, it would take them until they are at least 18 years old to reach this figure.

<sup>2</sup> 5-6 sugar cubes is the daily maximum recommended sugar intake for children aged 4 to 10 years (1 cube of sugar = 4 grams). Children are consuming 52.2 grams per day as per the NDNS.

options such as malt loaf, sugar-free jellies, lower-sugar custards and rice puddings would reduce their intake even more.

Severe obesity in ten-to-eleven year olds has now reached an all-time high. Overweight or obese children are more likely to be overweight or obese as adults, increasing their risk of heart disease and some cancers, while more young people than ever are developing Type 2 diabetes. Excess sugar can also lead to painful tooth decay, bullying and low self-esteem in childhood.

**Dr Alison Tedstone, chief nutritionist at PHE, said:**

“Children are consuming too much sugar, but parents can take action now to prevent this building up over the years.

“To make this easier for busy families, Change4Life is offering a straightforward solution – by making simple swaps each day, children can have healthier versions of everyday foods and drinks, while significantly reducing their sugar intake.”

Families are encouraged to look for the Change4Life ‘Good Choice’ badge in shops, download the free Food Scanner app or search Change4Life to help them find lower sugar options.

Popular brands – including Nestlé Shredded Wheat, Nestlé Low Sugar Oat Cheerios, Petits Filous and Soreen (malt loaf) – will display the ‘Good Choice’ badge online, in-store and throughout their advertising, to help parents find healthier options.

Customers can also find healthier options in supporting supermarkets including Asda and Aldi, as well as in Londis and Budgens convenience stores.

With a third of children leaving primary school overweight or obese<sup>3</sup>, tackling obesity requires wider action and is not just limited to individual efforts from parents. PHE is working with the food industry to remove 20% of sugar from the products contributing the most to children’s sugar intakes by 2020.

In May 2018, PHE published progress against the first-year sugar reduction ambition of 5%, which showed an average 2% reduction in sugar across categories for retailers and manufacturers.

While breakfast cereals and yoghurts and fromage frais were among the categories meeting or exceeding the 5% ambition, some products in these categories are still high in sugar – this is why Change4Life is making it easier for parents to find lower-sugar options.

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**Notes to editors**

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<sup>3</sup> National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) 2017/18: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/national-child-measurement-programme/2017-18-school-year>

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#### About the Change4Life campaign

1. The campaign has been designed to provide practical advice to families to help them choose healthier foods and drinks than the ones they are currently purchasing.
2. The [Change4Life website](#) and other campaign collateral will provide parents with lots of sugar swap ideas and a new 'Good Choice' thumbs up badge is being used by manufacturers to help families choose healthier, lower sugar products in-store and online.
3. Parents can sign up to Change4Life for prizes, easy tips and meal ideas: search Change4Life.
4. Support the campaign on social media using #makeaswap
5. The free Change4Life Food Scanner app can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play.
6. Please use the following link to download all campaign assets including the TV advert and campaign imagery: [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/156bbwjk34tf9am/AADiE8A\\_TAwkGQUZZ9\\_rkOeEa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/156bbwjk34tf9am/AADiE8A_TAwkGQUZZ9_rkOeEa?dl=0)

#### About Public Health England:

7. PHE exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through advocacy, partnerships, world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health. For more information on PHE visit [www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe) or follow us on Twitter @PHE\_uk.
8. PHE's *Sugar reduction: report on first year progress* is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sugar-reduction-report-on-first-year-progress>