

Support our children's health. Support a sugary drinks tax.

What are sugary drinks?

Sugary Drinks are any drinks with added sugar or other caloric sweeteners such as high fructose corn syrup including carbonated and noncarbonated soft drinks, fruit drinks, energy and sports drinks, and milk and yoghurt drinks. They may also include syrups and powdered beverages that need to be reconstituted with water.

Why tax sugary drinks?

Sugary drinks account for a large share of products purchased by Jamaican consumers. Drinking just one sugary drink a day increases the likelihood of being overweight by 27% for adults and 52 % for Children¹. One in two Jamaicans (54%) have been classified as overweight or obese² Sugary drink consumption leads to higher risks of disease and death, and are a major cause of increases in caloric intake, weight, and risk of diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and numerous other health problems.³ Children and adolescents of all ages have been shown to be negatively affected by consuming sugary drinks.⁴The Pan American Health organization(PAHO) estimates that NCDs will reduce Jamaica's GDP by a total of US\$ 18.45 billion between 2015 and 2030⁵Sugary drink taxes are particularly effective in reducing consumption and improving health among lower income consumers because this group is more responsive to price increases.⁶ This is important because lower income people often suffer disproportionately from the ill effects of obesity.⁷

How does it work?

The structure of the tax should be determined by the local fiscal environment. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a sugary drink tax of a minimum of 20%.

How are sugary drink taxes be structured?

Sales (ad valorem) tax	A retail sales tax on sugary drinks based on the retail value of the sugary drink. Expensive drinks like energy drinks face a higher tax than 'regular' carbonated drinks.
Volume tax	A tax is applied on the drink based on the fluid volume, usually measured in ounces.
Single-tier tax:	A volume tax applies to drinks with sugar content exceeding a specified level.
Double-tier tax	A volume tax applies to drinks with sugar content exceeding a specified level, and a higher rate is applied if sugar content exceeds a second threshold.

How can revenue from sugary drinks taxes support healthier communities?

Revenues raised from taxes can be used to promote the health of the population.⁸ Sugary Drinks are earmarked to support education and health programmes that support long term behaviour change amongst the most vulnerable in society, while reducing future costs to the government. In fact, **81 percent of Jamaicans support a tax on Sugary drinks if it used to support obesity prevention programmes for children**⁹

Possible uses can include;

- Supporting NCD prevention programmes in the Health Sector
- Jamaica Moves in Schools (which includes nutrition education)
- Implementation of The School nutrition policy
- The school feeding Programme focusing on using locally supplied food including vegetables and ground provisions which would also support our local farmers.

Support our children's health. Support a sugary drinks tax.

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- ¹ Center for Science in the Public Interest “Facts on Health Risks of Sugar Drinks “ retrieved from <https://cspinet.org/resource/facts-health-risks-sugar-drinks>
- ² Jamaica Health and Lifestyle Survey III 2016-2017, Preliminary Key Findings 2018
- ³ Malik VS, Hu FB. Fructose and Cardiometabolic Health: What the Evidence From Sugar-Sweetened Beverages Tells Us. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. 2015; 66(14): 1615-24.
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- ⁴ de Ruyter JC, Olthof MR, Seidell JC, Katan MB. A Trial of Sugar-free or Sugar-Sweetened Beverages and Body Weight in Children. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2012; 367(15): 1397-406.
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- ⁵ Pan American Health Organization, World Health Organization. *The Economic Burden of Non-Communicable Diseases and Mental Health in Jamaica, 2016*.
- ⁶ Colchero MA, Rivera-Dommarco J, Popkin BM, Ng SW. In Mexico, Evidence Of Sustained Consumer Response Two Years After Implementing A Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax. *Health Affairs*. 2017; 36(3): 564-71.
- ⁷ Jones-Smith JC, Gordon-Larsen P, Siddiqi A, Popkin BM. Emerging disparities in overweight by educational attainment in Chinese adults (1989-2006). *Int J Obes*. 2012; 36(6): 866-75.
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- ⁸ World Health Organization (WHO) Fact Sheet 2016 : Taxes on Sugary Drinks why do it? pg 3
- ⁹ Obesity Prevention Public Opinion Survey September 2018 http://109.73.225.157/~hrtf7162/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Obesity_Prevention_Public_Opinion_Survey_Jamaica_-_September_2018.pdf