



Campaign Backgrounder

Jamaica Obesity Prevention Campaign – “What’s In Our Food?”

Background

- 78% of all deaths (nearly 4 in 5) in Jamaica are caused by non-communicable diseases (NCDs)¹.
- Obesity is a serious NCD. One in two Jamaicans (54%) were classified as overweight (pre-obese or obese)².
- Obesity is increasing for Jamaican boys and girls (13-15). The obesity rate for boys almost doubled from 5.3% in 2010 to 10.3% in 2017 and an increase from 6.7% for girls in 2010 to 9.9% in 2017³.
- Foods high in salt, saturated fat and trans fat, and sugar can increase the risk of developing NCDs, like obesity, hypertension, and heart disease^{4 5 6}.
- Obesity can increase the risk of Type 2 diabetes, cancer, and heart disease⁷.
- Diabetes is the fourth highest cause of deaths in Jamaica. In its 2016 country profile report, WHO states that diabetes is responsible for 11% of total deaths in Jamaica⁸.
- There is sufficient evidence that being overweight or obese increases the risk of 13 types of cancer⁹.
- 55% of Jamaicans agreed that it takes too much time to interpret the nutrition facts panel.¹⁰
- 92% of Jamaicans support front-of-package labels on food and drinks as part of the government’s plan to promote a healthier diet in Jamaica.¹¹

Campaign Overview

The “What’s In Our Food?” Campaign aims to increase Jamaicans’ awareness about the importance of knowing the contents of their ultra-processed foods by carefully reading the labels, particularly those that are high in sugar and saturated fat or trans-fat. These types of food can lead to obesity, which can increase the risk of Type 2 diabetes, cancer, and heart disease. The campaign tagline is: “What’s in Our Food? Give us the Facts.” The campaign video tells the story of a Jamaican family (mom, dad, son, and daughter) eating an unhealthy breakfast consisting of high sugar and fat content. While the family is eating, a breaking news item on TV shows that obesity increases the risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and 13 types of cancer. The parents are shocked to learn this new information and immediately clear the table, replacing their unhealthy breakfast with healthier options.

Campaign Messages

What’s in our food? Give us the facts. Foods high in salt, saturated fat and trans fat and sugar can lead to obesity, hypertension, and heart disease. Obesity can increase the risk of Type 2 diabetes, cancer, and heart disease. Important information about unhealthy foods should be easy to read. You have the right to know what you’re eating.

Ways to Support the Campaign

1. Find out more at <https://heartfoundationja.org>
2. Reduce consumption of unhealthy foods.
3. Support ours and our children’s health.
4. Exercise your right to know what you’re eating.
5. Link your website to <https://heartfoundationja.org>
6. Publish the campaign materials on your website and social media pages.
7. Raise awareness and support the campaign regularly through your social media posts by:
 - a. using the hashtags: #What’sInOurFood?, #GiveUsTheFacts, #RightToKnow, and #FoodLabels
 - b. Like, comment, share or repost messages from @heartfoundationja social media pages.

¹ World Health Organization (WHO). Regional Mortality Estimates 2000-2015. 2017.

http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/estimates/en/index1.html

² Wilks, R, Younger, N, Tulloch-Reid, M, McFarlane, S, & Francis, D. Jamaica Health and Lifestyle Survey. 2016-2017.

<https://www.moh.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Jamaica-Health-and-Lifestyle-Survey-III-2016-2017.pdf>

³ National Council on Drug Abuse. 2017. Global School-Based Student Health Survey.

⁴ American Heart Association. Trans fat. 2017

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats/trans-fat>

⁵ American Heart Association. Sodium. 2018

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/sodium>

⁶ Harvard Health: The sweet dangers of sugar. 2017

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/the-sweet-danger-of-sugar>

⁷ US National Library of Medicine National Institute of Health. Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes. 2017

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5741209/>

⁸ World Health Organization (WHO). Diabetes Country Profile- Jamaica. 2016

http://www.who.int/diabetes/country-profiles/jam_en.pdf

⁹ The New England Journal of Medicine. Body Fatness and Cancer- Viewpoint of the IARC Working Group. 2016.

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMs1606602>

¹⁰ Obesity Prevention Public Opinion Survey (2019).

¹¹ Obesity Prevention Public Opinion Survey (2019).