

Processed Fruit Snacks Survey Report

September 2020



		Free Sugars Per 100g	Free Sugars Per Serving	Teaspoons of free sugar per serving	
		61.2g	18.4g		x4.5
		61.8g	12.4g		x3
		58.0g	9.3g		x2
		70.0g	8.3g		x2
		65.0g	7.7g		x2

1 teaspoon = 4g sugar

Free sugars are defined as 'All sugars naturally present in fruit and vegetable juices, concentrates, smoothies, purees, pastes, powders and extruded fruit and vegetable products. This includes pureed legumes, pureed dried fruit and juice and syrup present in canned fruits and vegetables

A high free sugar intake increases the risk of dental caries (tooth decay) and higher energy intakes

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Background

Sugar and Health

Excessive sugar consumption contributes to overweight, obesity and related health conditions such as type 2 diabetes, various cancers and tooth decay. The wider costs to society of obesity are estimated to be as high as £27 billion (1), with one in three adults, and one in ten children, having obesity by age 5, rising to one in five by age 11 (2).

Free Sugars are Sugars

Free sugars include honey, syrups and nectars, whether added to products during manufacturing or by the consumer. This includes ingredients such as malt extract, glucose syrup, lactose and galactose added as ingredients and all sugars naturally present in fruit and vegetable juices, concentrates, smoothies, purees, pastes, powders and extruded fruit and vegetable products (3) (Extrusion is used in food processing, mechanically shaping soft mixed ingredients to produce the required shape).

Free sugars are found in a wide range of foods such as sweets, cakes, biscuits, juices and fizzy drinks, and these can be detrimental to health if consumed in excess. While foods such as fruit and dairy products can be a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre, foods containing free sugars often have very little or no nutritional benefit. Certain food and drink manufacturers claim their products are a good source of energy (e.g. energy drinks manufacturers) because their products contain added sugars, but this is misleading. The body converts carbohydrates into sugars (glucose), which are found in everyday products such as fruits, vegetables, bread, pasta and rice; there is no need whatsoever for added or free sugars in our diets to generate energy.

Oral Health and Sugars

Sugary food and drinks are the main causes of tooth decay. This includes naturally occurring sugar in dried fruit, such as raisins, dates and apricots. Public Health England's (PHE) ambition is for 'every child to grow up free of tooth decay' (4). However, the Local Government Association announced in August 2020 that nearly 45,000 hospital operations were performed to remove rotten teeth - equivalent to nearly 180 operations a day - costing the NHS £40 million (5). PHE's data shows that per child, an average of three school days a year were missed due to dental problems. The cost for treating children's dental decay in both hospitals and primary care is almost £250 million (6).

Fruit Snacks and Sugars

Processed dried fruit snacks are made from juices, purées, pastes and extruded fruit and vegetables. They are often baked and pressed into shapes such as stars, strips or strings. Processed, dried fruit products are marketed as healthy snacks due to their high fruit content. However, as the fruit has been processed, they are also high in free sugars which children should be reducing in their diets. The sticky nature of dried fruit and processed dried fruit means they stick to teeth and are only recommended to be given to children with meals as a dessert and not as a snack in between meals (7). To eat the same

number of grams of sugars in a processed fruit snack (around 18g) a child will have to eat about 240g of strawberries – that's equivalent to a whole punnet (8).

Snacking already forms a large part of daily food and drink intake, especially in children. Children typically have two snacks a day which could account for around a quarter of their daily energy intake (9) and half their sugar intake.

There has been a reported increase in snacking during the COVID-19 pandemic, with several public polling surveys investigating eating habits, including:

- **Oral Health Foundation** - Polling found snacking had increased amongst families with younger children. Seven-in-ten families (70%) with children under five are reporting more snacking in the household, this is more than double compared with those who are not living with children (10).
- **Obesity Action Scotland** - Polling found that the majority of people in Scotland (54%) are eating more out of boredom, 49% report eating more cakes and biscuits, 47% eating more confectionery, 38% eating more savoury snacks, and 34% eating more long-shelf-life foods (11).
- **Obesity Health Alliance** - Polling found 39% of adults were eating more sweets and confectionery, while 20% said they are eating less (12).



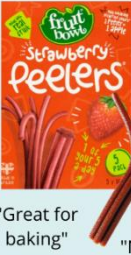
Fruit Snacks Claims – The Health Halo

These products use marketing terms that confuse parents and take advantage of current labelling legislation. Claims and statements such as 'No added sugar', '1 of your 5 a day' and 'naturally occurring sugars' regularly appear on these products. Processed fruit snacks are often described and grouped on supermarket websites, and are positioned in store, as children's or baby and toddler snacks (13). The global market for fruit snacks was valued at \$30 billion in 2017 and is projected to reach \$40 billion by 2024 (14). It was reported in February 2020 by analysts Fact.MR that the fruit snacks market would grow at an average of 8.5% each year over the next eight years (15).

The UK population are not consuming enough vegetables, and to a lesser extent, fruit. Fruit and vegetables provide us with essential micronutrients and fibre and there are several campaigns that aim to increase intakes such as '5 a day', Veg Power (16) and Peas Please (17). The Government's '5 a day' campaign allows products containing the equivalent of 80g (30g for dried fruit) or more fruit and vegetables to display their logo, as long as they don't have any other added ingredients (18), but companies can freely create and use their own logos with less strict parameters. Research by the University of Glasgow found that 75.4% of products in their survey made a '1 of your 5 a day claim' but were made up of less than 80 g of fruit and vegetables (19).

To capitalise on healthy messaging opportunities, there has been a rise in products on the market which are derived from fruit and vegetables, and feature claims such as 'Kellogg's no added sugar Raspberry, Apple and Carrot Granola' which states 'No added sugar' despite having 16g sugar per 100g coming from fruit pastes and purees, (20) and 'Emily Veg Crisps- Sweet potato, carrot and beetroot crisps' which claim '1 of your 5 a day' despite containing added salt (21).

Research commissioned by PHE in 2018 found that consumers felt the use of terms such as 'organic', 'preservative free' or 'no added sugar', alongside promoting vegetable ingredients, suggested these were healthy products. Many also assumed that any foods labelled 'no added sugar/salt' meant these were actually *low* in sugar/salt, and therefore appropriate snack choices for children. This is called a 'health halo'. Importantly, participants in the survey did not feel it was necessary to examine nutrition labels more closely if labelling suggested a healthy product (22).



This packet tells you..

- "Gluten Free"
- "Made with real fruit"
- "1 of your 5 a day"
- "Yum Yum"
- "Fruit made fun"
- "Ideal as a snack"
- "Perfect for little lunchboxes"
- "Great for baking"
- "Only naturally occurring sugars"
- "No added sugar"

But they fail to mention the cellular structure of the sugar in fruit is broken down when processed. The sticky nature of these products mean they stick to teeth. Both mean there is a greater risk of tooth decay

But we guess that's not as catchy to put on the pack?

Free sugars are defined as All sugars naturally present in fruit and vegetable juices, concentrates, smoothies, purees, pastes, powders and extruded fruit and vegetable products. This includes pureed legumes, pureed dried fruit and juice and syrup present in canned fruits and vegetables.

Action on Sugar

A high free sugar intake increases the risk of dental caries (tooth decay) and higher energy intakes



This packet tells you..

- "No artificial colours or flavours"
- "Great for home baking"
- "Suitable for 12months+"
- "100% organic fruit"
- "Contains naturally occurring sugars"

But they fail to mention the cellular structure of the sugar in fruit is broken down when processed. The sticky nature of these products mean they stick to teeth. Both mean there is a greater risk of tooth decay

But we guess that's not as catchy to put on the pack?

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Action on Sugar

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Infant and young children snacks

In their 2019 report ***Foods and drinks aimed at infants and young children: evidence and opportunities for action***, PHE expressed concern about the growth in the market of children's snack foods and the way these products encourage snacking on sweet foods. This review concluded that the use of processed fruit ingredients, particularly in fruit and vegetable-based and sweet finger foods, means that some products aimed at infants and young children have an even higher sugar content than biscuits or sweet confectionery products (22).

They further commented that although fruit and vegetables are recommended first foods for infants and young children, the advice is to start with single vegetables and fruits that are less sweet. Processed fruit snacks take the majority of the space in the market, and a less sweet product mix would better prepare babies to accept a wide range of tastes and protect dental health.

Nutrition Labelling of Sugars

The government has voluntary guidance, managed by the Department of Health and Social Care, on front of pack nutrition labels (23). Following a consultation, in 2013 UK Health Ministers recommended voluntary traffic light label - a colour-coded system which shows at a glance whether a product is high (red) medium (amber) or low (green) in fat, saturated fat, salt and sugars, including the total energy (kilocalories and kilojoules) it provides.

Consumer Insights research found that sugars was seen as the most important information on the label (24). Since 2013, dietary advice on sugars has changed to the recommendation that those over 11 years old should consume no more than 30g **free sugars** per day, 19g for 4-6 year olds, and 24g for 7-10 year olds.

This resulted in sugar content being poorly represented on food and drink labels as current labelling gives an 'allowance' of 90g of **total sugars** per person per day, called a Reference Intake (RI). This RI is based on total sugars – which as well as including free sugars (sugar in processed fruit, table sugar, honey and syrups) also includes sugars from milk and whole fruits and vegetables that are not harmful. This could give the impression that processed foods contribute less of the 'unhealthy' free sugars than they really do, particularly as these products are marketed to children and the figures are based on adult intakes.



[You can submit views to the current Front of Pack Labelling consultation until October 21st 2020](#)

Figure 1: The UK Government and Devolved Administration's recommended Traffic Light Label format from Tesco Apple & Sultana Bars

UK Policies to Reduce Children's Sugar Intakes

Since the 2015 Action on Sugar survey, we have seen several policies put in place to reduce population sugar intake, including a sugar reduction programme. Launched in 2016, the government challenged businesses to reduce sugar in foods that contribute most to children's free sugar intake according to National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) data, by 20% by 2020. This includes products such as breakfast cereals, yogurts, cakes, confectionary and milk-based drinks. However, processed fruit snacks are excluded from this programme, despite containing high amounts of free sugars and being popular with children.

Processed Fruit Snacks - Previous Research

There has been much research in this area, including **Action on Sugar** research in 2015, which revealed huge amounts of hidden sugars in seemingly 'healthy' fruit snacks aimed at children, with over three quarters (85%) of products surveyed (i.e. 80 of the 94 products) containing more sugars than Haribo Starmix (47g/100g) confectionery per 100g – with some containing over 4 teaspoons per portion. All products surveyed would receive a 'red' colour-coded warning on the label for HIGH sugars per 100g. In addition, misleading packaging claims stated these fruit snacks can contribute to '1 of your 5' portions of fruit and vegetables a day. At the time, Action on Sugar called for these snacks to NOT form part of a child's 5 a day and for the new government to set sugar reduction targets immediately.

In 2018, **First Steps Nutrition** released a report which highlighted the potential dangers of processed, dried fruit products. They found similar results to our survey and that products marketed as snacks equivalent to eating a piece of fruit in a child's diet had similar free sugars content to confectionary. In addition, they found that the name of the product did not reflect the ingredients, for example, a product named Strawberry and Butternut Claws contained just 7% strawberry and 33% butternut with the rest made up of apple and pear which are naturally sweeter. They also found that these products are expensive when compared to the whole fruit or vegetable equivalent (25).

Processed Fruit Snacks - 2020 Survey

To establish the sugar content of processed fruit snacks, review claims made on packaging and compare to the 2015 survey, Action on Sugar undertook a review of processed fruit snacks sold at UK retail outlets.

Method

Action on Sugar collected product information for 56 processed fruit snacks in the weeks commencing 24th August and 5th September 2020. We undertook an initial search online and then purchased branded and own brand products, where available, from Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose & Partners, Asda, Morrisons, Marks & Spencer, Aldi, Lidl, Co-op, Boots, Holland and Barrett and Iceland. Nutrition information as well as claims made on pack such as '1 of your 5 a day' were collected, uploaded and analysed using the FoodSwitch database (26).

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Coated/Flavoured dried fruit (e.g. yogurt coated raisins, sour raisins)Processed/extruded fruit (e.g. fruit winders, fruit strings) <p>NB: Including those with added sugar as well as those that claim 'no added sugar'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Whole dried fruit (e.g. whole dried apricots)Fruit Crisps (Dried apple crisps)Dried fruit with additions (e.g. oat bars, fruit and nut bars, puffs, wafers)Chocolate coated fruit and chocolate coated extruded fruit

Results

- 57% of products have more free sugars than Haribo Starmix (27) confectionary per 100g – with one product (Kiddylicious Apple Fruit Wriggles 12g) made of 70% sugars
- 65% had the equivalent of 2 teaspoons of sugars or more in just one single portion – the same as eating an iced doughnut (28).
- ALL products surveyed would receive a RED traffic light label for HIGH sugars

Our data revealed that 'Healthy' fruit snacks for children can contain nearly as much as 5 teaspoons of sugars per serving – the equivalent of eating a packet of jelly beans (29). All products surveyed would receive a red traffic light front of pack label for high sugars, meaning they are not a healthy snack choice. Furthermore, many of these products are wrongly advertised as 'snacks' despite guidance that children should not consume these products in between meals, and that they are not permitted in schools because they are categorised as 'confectionery' (30).

Processed dried fruit products are marketed as 'healthy snacks' due to their high fruit content. However, the sugars in these products are categorised by Public Health England as 'free sugars' as they contain purees, concentrates, juices and extruded fruit or added sugar by coating or flavouring dried fruit – all of which can contribute to obesity, Type 2 Diabetes and tooth decay.

With current labelling based on total sugars, many parents could be mistakenly buying these processed fruit snacks assuming they contribute less of the ‘unhealthy’ sugars than they actually do. The 90g sugar RI figure is based on an adult’s intake of total sugars and not a child’s. The recommended daily maximum of free sugar for a 4-6 year old is 19g, 24g for 7-10 year olds and for anyone over 11 years its 30g. For example, **Tesco Apple & Sultana Bars** claim to be 20% of your daily intake of sugars when in fact at 18.4g, they contain nearly 5 teaspoons of free sugar, nearly the recommended daily maximum allowance for a 4-6-year-old in just one bar.

Table 1: Examples of high sugars fruit snacks

Product Name & Pack Size	Sugars (g) per 100g	Sugars (g) per serving	Equivalent teaspoons* of sugar per serving**
Kiddylicious Apple Fruit Wriggles 12g	70	8.3	2.1
Tesco Apple & Sultana Bars 5 x 30g	61.2	18.4	4.6
Organix Blackcurrant & Apple Stars 12g	65	7.7	1.9
The Fruit Factory Strawberry, Apple, Orange Fruit Stars 5 x 20g	61.8	12.4	3.1
Fruit Bowl Strawberry Peelers 5 x 16g	58	9.3	2.3

* 4 grams of sugar (granulated) is equal to 1 teaspoon of sugar.

** serving size as stated on product packaging

	Free Sugars Per 100g	Free Sugars Per Serving	Recommendations
	61.2g	18.4g 4.5tsp	Children under 4yrs old should avoid anything with free sugars
	61.8g	12.4g 3tsp	
	58.0g	9.3g 2tsp	4-6yr olds should have no more than 19g free sugars / day (5tsp)
	70.0g	8.3g 2tsp	7-10yr olds should have no more than 24g free sugars / day (6tsp)
	65.0g	7.7g 2tsp	Adults should have no more than 30g free sugars / day (7.5tsp)
			<p>*tsp = teaspoon 1tsp = 4g sugar</p> <p>Free sugars are defined as 'All sugars naturally present in fruit and vegetable juices, concentrates, smoothies, purees, pastes, powders and extruded fruit and vegetable products. This includes pureed legumes, pureed dried fruit and juice and syrup present in canned fruits and vegetables</p> <p>A high free sugar intake increases the risk of dental caries (tooth decay) and higher energy intakes</p>

The popular **Bear** products have made reductions across all comparable products (an average of around 16% lower than in 2015) which is to be applauded. However, the use of several health claims on their packaging, and lack of traffic light labelling (for which they would still get a 'red' for high sugars), means they are still being sold under a misleading health halo.

As the latest figures (announced last month) by the Local Government Association (31) showed nearly 45,000 hospital operations were performed to remove rotten teeth, this is a stark reminder that too much sugar in children's diets can have dire consequences – with many suffering agonising pain and emotional suffering all at very young ages. What's most concerning is this is all entirely preventable.

Table 2 showing the 5 highest in sugar per 100g of product

Product Name & Pack Size	Sugars (g) per 100g	Sugars (g) per serving	Teaspoons of sugar* per serving**
Kiddylicious Apple Fruit Wriggles 12g	70.0	8.3	2.1
Kiddylicious Banana, Mango & Passion Fruit Smoothie Melts 6g	69.0	4.1	1.0
Kiddylicious Strawberry Fruit Wriggles 4 x 12g	69.0	8.3	2.1
Kiddylicious Strawberry & Banana Smoothie Melts 6g	67.0	4.0	1.0
Fruit Bowl Juicy Yogurt Raisins 5 x 25g	66.0	16.0	4.0

* 4 grams of sugar (granulated) is equal to 1 teaspoon of sugar.

** serving size as stated on product packaging

Table 3 showing the 5 lowest in sugar per 100g of product

Product Name & Pack Size	Sugars (g) per 100g	Sugars (g) per serving	Teaspoons of sugar* per serving**
Bear Blackcurrant & Beetroot 100% fruit & veg Bites 5 x 18g	34.0	6.1	1.5
Bear Apple & Pumpkin Paws 20g	34.0	8.0	2.0
Bear Mango & Carrot Paws 5 x 20g	34.0	8.0	2.0
Bear Strawberry & Butternut Squash Bites 5 x 18g	34.0	6.1	1.5
Fruit Bowl Raspberry School Bars 5 x 20g	35.0	7.0	1.8

* 4 grams of sugar (granulated) is equal to 1 teaspoon of sugar.

** serving size as stated on product packaging

Cost

Previous research in this area has highlighted the inflated cost of these processed fruit snacks compared with whole fruit and vegetables (25). Sun Maid Sour Raisins Strawberry (7 x 20g) were purchased in Waitrose & Partners for £3.50 (33) making them the equivalent cost of £25 per kg. Waitrose & Partners Raisins (34) are £4 per kg and so are over six times cheaper.

2015 vs 2020

When comparing fruit snack products from Action on Sugar's 2015 survey (32) to all available comparable products, these new findings have shown that whilst progress has been made in reducing the overall sweetness in certain products by using vegetables as well as fruit, some now worryingly appear to be HIGHER in free sugars than in 2015.

Table 4 showing comparable products in 2015 and in 2020

Product Name & Pack Size	Sugars (g) per 100g in 2015	Sugars (g) per 100g in 2020	Higher/Lower /No Change
Kiddylicious Apple Fruit Wriggles 12g	60.6	70.0	Higher
Kiddylicious Strawberry Fruit Wriggles 4 x 12g	48.4	69.0	Higher
Organix Blackcurrant & Apple Stars 12g	62.8	65.0	Higher
Organix Raspberry & Apple Moos 12g	57.1	64.0	Higher
The Fruit Factory Strawberry, Apple, Orange Fruit Stars 5 x 20g	47.2	61.8	Higher
Organix Strawberry & Apple Gummies 12g	67.2	64.0	Lower
Tesco Strawberry Bites with a Yogurt Flavoured Coating 5 x 25g	70.1	61.9	Lower
Whitworths Sunny Dunked Yogurt Coated Raisins 5 x 25g	68.8	61.2	Lower
Organix Chunky Apple & Date Fruit Bars 6 x 17g	57.0	46.0	Lower
Bear Apple Yo Yos 5 x 20g	48.0	42.0	Lower
Bear Blackcurrant Yo Yos 5 x 20g	49.0	42.0	Lower
Bear Mango Yo Yos 5 x 20g	48.0	42.0	Lower
Bear Pineapple Yo Yos 20g	48.0	42.0	Lower
Bear Raspberry Yo Yos 5 x 20g	49.0	42.0	Lower
Bear Strawberry Yo Yos 5 x 20g	49.0	42.0	Lower
Bear Apple & Blackcurrant Paws 5 x 20g	48.0	38.0	Lower
Bear Strawberry & Apple Paws 5 x 20g	49.0	38.0	Lower
Bear Raspberry & Blueberry Paws 5 x 20g	49.0	37.8	Lower
Fruit Bowl Raspberry School Bars 5 x 20g	45.0	35.0	Lower
Fruit Bowl Strawberry School Bars 5 x 20g	45.0	35.0	Lower
Fruit Bowl Juicy Yogurt Raisins 5 x 25g	66.0	66.0	No Change
Fruit Bowl Blackcurrant Yogurt Flakes 5 x 21g	62.0	62.0	No Change
Fruit Bowl Strawberry Yogurt Flakes 5 x 21g	62.0	62.0	No Change
Fruit Bowl Raspberry peelers	58.0	58.0	No Change
Fruit Bowl Strawberry Flakes 5 x 18g	58.0	58.0	No Change
Organix Chunky Banana & Date Fruit Bars 6 x 17g	58.5	58.0	No Change
The Fruit Factory Strawberry Fruit Strings 5 x 20g	48.2	48.2	No Change
The Fruit Factory Strawberry, Apple, Orange Fruit Strings 5 x 20g	47.2	47.2	No Change
Kellogg's Strawberry & Blackcurrant Fruit Winders Doubles 6 x 17g	37.0	37.0	No Change
Kellogg's Strawberry Fruit Winders 6 x 17g	37.0	37.0	No Change

Quotes

Graham MacGregor CBE - Chairman of Action on Sugar, Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, Queen Mary University of London says:

Whilst the Government gets to grips with the current Covid-19 pandemic, it mustn't ignore that the situation is fueling the UK's other pandemics – obesity, Type 2 Diabetes and tooth decay – all linked to high sugar intakes which the food industry is solely responsible for. It's imperative that whichever organisation takes over from Public Health England, ensure comprehensive and compulsory reformulation targets are set across the whole of the food industry to gradually reduce the amount of sugar and excess calories in food and drink."

Katharine Jenner - Campaign Director of Action on Sugar, Queen Mary University of London says:

"The message to food manufacturers is quite simple: Stop tricking parents into thinking your products are healthy. The only information about nutrition that should be on children's foods is the nutrition information panel and the colour-coded ('traffic light') front of pack label. However, manufacturers are hiding behind health halos of messages such as '*made with real fruit*' and '*no added sugars*' to obscure the fact that processed fruit-based snacks are as unhealthy as sweets and sugary drinks. Parents are struggling to feed their children healthy food already without manufacturers making the process even more confusing. It's time to be honest about what's in your products and remove these claims."

Holly Gabriel – Registered Nutritionist and Nutrition Manager at Action on Sugar adds:

"This survey has exposed the huge amounts of sugar in these processed fruit snacks which should all be clearly referenced with mandatory front of pack labelling. Not only does the UK have very high rates of children living with obesity but also record numbers of children suffering from tooth decay which causes excruciating pain and suffering and often results in teeth being extracted. These processed fruit products should not be eaten in between mealtimes, children should be encouraged to snack on whole fruits and vegetables and not excessively sweet products that damage teeth."

Sheena Bhageerutty – Assistant Nutritionist at Action on Sugar adds:

"These products line the shelves of the 'baby and child' aisle in supermarkets with attractive packaging designed to appeal to new parents. However, the nutritional information is hidden on the back of the packaging making it unclear to tell at a glance if they are a good choice or not. Our research has uncovered the truth that, based on their high sugars content, these fruit snacks would be better placed in the confectionery aisle."

Given the significance of the findings we received the following comments in response to the results of our survey:

Dr Saul Konviser from charity, Dental Wellness Trust said:

"Parents be warned. These so called 'healthy' fruit snacks can bind and trap sugars on and around the tooth making children's teeth more susceptible to tooth decay – especially as they are less likely to floss or brush their teeth – which are also much thinner in density. Whilst these fruity snacks may be convenient, they are not a healthy option – nor tooth friendly."

Barbara Crowther, Children's Food Campaign Co-ordinator, said:

"Parents tell us that claims such as "no added sugar" and "one of your 5 a day" on processed fruit snacks containing significant free sugar levels are incredibly confusing and misleading. These products are carefully branded and also often marketed with cartoon characters to give parents the impression they are suitable and healthy for their children. But this research shows clearly that many of them contain similar levels of free sugars as sweets and biscuits. We strongly support recommendations to make nutritional labels clearer and mandatory, as well as address the use of misleading health claims and child-friendly characters on food and drink packaging."

Dr Helen Crawley, Director, First Steps Nutrition Trust said:

"Just as we found in our report on processed dried fruit snacks aimed at young children in 2018 the market continues to allow families to be misled about the healthiness of these products. Many of the processed fruit snacks are designed to appeal to very young children, where the amount of sugars they contain can easily exceed the amount recommended daily for good health. We fully back an urgent change in labelling laws for foods marketed to children to ensure they do not mislead parents that they are fruit equivalent".

Conclusion

Our survey has highlighted that the majority of processed fruit snack products have more free sugars than popular confectionary, and that all products surveyed would have a red front of pack label for sugars due to their high sugar content. This clearly illustrates how the health halo, created by misleading claims on the packaging, is unwarranted and unhelpful for parent's trying to make a healthy choice for their young children.

Action on Sugar recommendations

Urgent attention is required from the government to ensure that gaps in current health policy do not contribute to the rise in obesity and related health conditions. Action on Sugar urges Government to prove it is committed to preventing ill health and reducing health inequalities by:

1. **Banning the use of misleading claims on processed fruit snacks such as '*1 of your 5 a day*', '*Naturally occurring sugars*' or '*Made from real fruit*'**
2. **Including processed fruit snacks in any new future policy aimed at reducing sugar and calorie intake in children and infants**
3. **Ensuring that its current consultation on Front of Pack Labelling (FOPL) in the UK results in mandatory FOPL that reflects the latest dietary advice on free sugars (3) (not total sugars)**
4. **Not allowing processed fruit snacks to be advertised as snacks that can be given in between meals**
5. **Ensure both the composition, and the packaging, of prepared infant and child foods is included in any future Government consultations on infant feeding**

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About us

Action on Sugar was launched in 2014 to inform and influence sugar reduction policies in the UK, which can also be replicated worldwide, to support the population in consuming no more than the recommended five percent of total energy from free sugars.

Action on Sugar comprises leading expert advisors who have been striving to commit the government to releasing an evidenced-based childhood obesity strategy and to ensure that it is then implemented effectively.

Action on Sugar has successfully created a huge amount of awareness of the impact of excess sugar and calorie consumption on our wellbeing. Already, manufacturers and retailers have reformulated their products following our widely publicised surveys exposing the high and low sugar products through national, and international, media. Action on Sugar works closely with the food and drink industry to inform their nutrition strategies and provide technical expertise around sugar reduction. We publish research in influential journals demonstrating our findings and modelling the impact of sugar reduction strategies, which is used to influence the decision of policy makers with persuasive evidenced-based arguments.

Action on Sugar is a registered charity and is funded by charitable donations. We do not accept any funding from the food or drinks industry.



FoodSwitch UK is a free app brought to you by Action on Sugar, in collaboration with The George Institute for Global Health, to help you find out what's in the food you're eating, so you can make simple switches to healthier options. Simply scan the barcode of your regular brand to get colour coded nutrition information and see a list of healthier alternatives. Download the app [here](#).



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