

立法會 *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(2)1182/14-15(08)

Ref : CB2/PL/FE

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Information note prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 14 April 2015

Reduction of sugar and salt content in food

According to the Administration, excessive dietary salt intake will increase the risk of developing hypertension, stroke and heart diseases, while excessive dietary sugar intake will lead to obesity and dental caries. A survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department in 2011-2012 indicated that 34 per cent of the local population aged 55 or above suffered from hypertension. Another survey conducted by the Department of Health in 2012 found that about 37 per cent of the local population aged between 18 and 64 were classified as overweight or obese.

2. In the light of the above, the Government plans to devise and implement a strategic plan to reduce intake of salt and sugar in food to promote a healthy diet. It is targeted to reduce gradually the intake of salt and sugar by Hong Kong people to the levels recommended by the World Health Organization ("WHO"). In terms of salt, WHO has recommended its members to meet a target of 30% relative reduction in mean population intake of salt (i.e. from 10 grams to seven grams in the case of Hong Kong) by 2025, with an ultimate aim of achieving a target of maximum daily intake of five grams. In terms of sugars, WHO has recommended that the daily intake of free sugars should be less than 50 grams (i.e. 10 sugar cubes) for an individual with a daily energy intake of 2 000 kilocalories. According to WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, free sugars are defined as "all sugars added to foods by manufacturers, cooks, or consumers, plus sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, and fruit juices.

Reduction of sugar and salt content in food

3. On 10 May 2013, the Administration provided an information paper on reduction of salt (sodium) and sugar content in food to the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene ("the Panel") vide LC Paper No.

CB(2)1118/12-13(01). Members were advised that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") had been promoting the reduction of salt and sugar content in food through conducting risk assessment studies, implementing the Nutrition Labelling Scheme ("NLS")¹ and collaborating with the Food Trade. The Centre for Food Safety ("CFS") of FEHD established in 2013 the Working Group on Reducing Sodium in Food and the Working Group on Reducing Sugars in Pre-packaged Beverages respectively to strengthen the collaboration with the trade in promoting the reduction of salt or sugar in food.

4. In early 2014, CFS established the International Advisory Panel on Reduction of Dietary Sodium and Sugar (now renamed as International Advisory Panel on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food), comprising five experts from the Mainland and overseas, to study international successful experience in promoting the reduction of sodium and sugar in diets.

5. When the Panel was briefed on the Chief Executive's 2015 Policy Address in respect of the portfolio of food safety and environmental hygiene at the meeting on 21 January 2015, some members expressed support for the Administration's plan to reduce intake of salt and sugar in food. They suggested the Administration to regulate the use of salt in food, standardize the labelling requirement on salt and sugar content of imported food and to conduct a comprehensive survey on salt and sugar consumption by Hong Kong people. The Administration advised that it would shortly establish a Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugars in Food. CFS also planned to hold an international symposium in May 2015 to invite experts and stakeholders to exchange views on how to reduce salt and sugars in food.

Latest development

6. On 13 March 2015, the Government announced the establishment of the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food ("The Committee"). The Committee, chaired by Mr Bernard Charnwut Chan, is responsible for making recommendations to the Secretary for Food and Health on the formulation of policy directions and work plans to reduce the intake of salt and sugar by the public, as well as to reduce salt and sugar in food. The Committee convened its first meeting on 27 March 2015. The relevant press release issued by the Administration is in **Appendix I**.

¹ Under NLS, all prepackaged foods, apart from some exempted food items, must carry nutrition labels which include the information on energy content and seven specified nutrients, namely, carbohydrates, protein, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and sugars (i.e. the "1+7"). NLS also covers nutrition claims which include nutrient content claim, nutrient comparative claim and nutrient function claim. NLS stipulates that a product with a claim of "low sodium" shall contain not more than 120 milligrams of sodium per 100 grams or milliliters of the food; and a product with a claim of "low sugars" shall contain not more than five grams of per 100 grams or milliliters of the food.

7. The Administration will update the Panel on the progress in reducing sugar and salt in food at the meeting on 14 April 2015.
8. A list of relevant papers at the LegCo website is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
2 April 2015

Appendix I

Press Releases

Government sets up committee to promote reduction of salt and sugar in food

The Government today (March 13) announced the establishment of the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food. The Committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Secretary for Food and Health on the formulation of policy directions and work plans to reduce the intake of salt and sugar by the public, as well as to reduce salt and sugar in food.

The Chairperson of the Committee is Mr Bernard Charnwut Chan, Executive Council member, and the Vice-chairperson, Dr Mak Sin-ping, the first Controller of the Centre for Food Safety. Members of the Committee comprise representatives from different sectors, including healthcare professional organisations, the food trade, the relevant academia, the media, consumers and the education sector.

The Government also continues to appoint the five renowned public health experts from the Mainland and overseas as members of the International Advisory Panel on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food (formerly known as International Advisory Panel on Reduction of Dietary Sodium and Sugars in Hong Kong). They will share successful international experiences in promoting the reduction of salt and sugar in food to tie in with the work of the Committee.

The appointments of both the Committee and the Panel are for a term of three years from March 15, 2015, to March 14, 2018.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said salt and sugar are closely related to health. Excessive dietary salt intake will increase the risk of developing hypertension, stroke and coronary heart diseases, while excessive dietary sugar intake will lead to obesity and dental caries.

"According to a survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department in 2011-12, 34 per cent of the local population aged 55 or above suffered from hypertension. Another survey conducted by the Department of Health in 2012 found that about 37 per cent of the local population aged between 18 and 64 were classified as overweight or obese. Obesity increases the risk of a number of chronic diseases. As such, the Government plans to devise and implement a strategic plan to reduce intake of salt and sugar in food to promote a healthy diet. The Committee and the Panel are set up to take forward the work," the spokesman said.

The Committee will convene its first meeting on March 27. Its terms of reference are as follows:

1. To steer the direction and coordinate the work of reducing salt and sugar intake by the local population, including:
 - assessment and monitoring of the local situation;
 - setting out priority areas for reduction of salt and sugar in food and formulation of local reduction targets; and
 - promotion and public education strategy.
2. To formulate and oversee the implementation and evaluation of

the Action Plans for Salt and Sugar Reduction in Food in Hong Kong.

Membership of the Committee is as follows:

Chairperson

Mr Bernard Charnwut Chan

Vice-Chairperson

Dr Mak Sin-ping

Non-official members

Mr Alfred KT Cheung
Mr Langton Cheung Yung-pong
Professor Kwan Hoi-shan
Professor Annisa Lee Lai Chun-hing
Mr Lam Chiu-wing
Ms Sylvia Lam See-way
Dr Lau Suet-ting
Mr Lee Yuen-hong
Professor Ronald Ma Ching-wan
Mrs Elizabeth Mok Lee Mi-yu
Ms Jo Ngai Yee-shan
Dr Grace Poon Wing-kit
Dr Ricky Szeto Wing-fu
Mr Terry Ting Ho-yan
Mr Raymond Tong
Dr Jimmy Wong Chi-ho
Mr Clory Wong
Ms Gilly Wong Fung-han
Mr Jason Wong Ho-yin
Mr Kelvin Yau

Ex-officio Members

Representative of Food and Health Bureau
Representative of Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Representative of Department of Health
Representative of Education Bureau

The five members of the Panel are Professor Norman Campbell from Canada, Professor Graham MacGregor from the United Kingdom, Professor Bruce Neal from Australia, Professor Pekka Puska from Finland and Professor Zhao Wenhua from the Mainland.

Ends/Friday, March 13, 2015
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Appendix II

Relevant papers on Reduction of sugar and salt content in food

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene	---	LC Paper No. CB(2)1118/12-13(01)
	21.1.2015 (Item I)	Agenda LC Paper No. CB(2)634/14-15(01)

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Legislative Council Secretariat
2 April 2015