



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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13 December 2017

Clerk to LegCo Panel on Food Safety and
Environmental Hygiene
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Miss Josephine SO)
(Fax: 2509 9055)

Dear Miss SO,

Initiatives on the Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food

During the discussion about the initiatives on the reduction of salt and sugar in food at the meeting of the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene on 14 November 2017, members requested the Government to provide further information, including the meetings held by the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food (CRSS) and the attendance rates of its members, matters related to the implementation of the “Salt/Sugar” Label Scheme for Prepackaged Food Products etc. In response to the above request, we provide supplementary information as follows.

CRSS Meetings, Members’ Attendance Situation and related Work

CRSS was established in March 2015, under which there are three working groups, namely, Working Group on Lowering Content of Salt and Sugar in Food (Working Group A), Working Group on Reducing Dietary Intake of Salt and Sugar (Working Group B), and Working Group on Publicity and Education (Working Group C).

There are 22 non-official members (including Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson) on CRSS. For the three working groups, there are 15 non-official members (including 7 co-opted members) in Working Group A; 18 (including 9 co-opted members) in Working Group B; and 16 (including 6 co-opted members) in Working Group C. The membership lists of CRSS and the three working groups are at Annexes 1 to 4.

From March 2015 to November 2017, CRSS and its working groups held a total of 17 formal meetings, including 4 CRSS formal meetings, 1 formal meeting of CRSS with overseas and Mainland experts, 4 formal meetings of Working Group A, 3 formal meetings of Working Group B, and 5 formal meetings of Working Group C. Please see Annex 5 for details.

The 17 formal meetings were only one of the means for CRSS and its working groups to discuss and promote the work of reducing salt and sugar. Apart from formal meetings, group discussions, consultation meetings with the trade, exchanges with relevant stakeholders as well as overseas and Mainland experts were held on about 20 occasions during the said period for in-depth and focused discussion on various topics.

The discussion topics of CRSS and its working groups covered the experience and measures of other countries/regions in salt and sugar reduction; the direction and priorities in promoting salt and sugar reduction in Hong Kong; the strategies for public education and publicity; devising and overseeing the “Calorie” indication pilot scheme, salt and sugar reduction label design and slogan writing cum poster design competitions, as well as the “Salt/Sugar” Label Scheme for Prepackaged Food Products; devising and overseeing the production of radio programmes and YouTube videos on the promotion of salt and sugar reduction; giving advice on the “Funding Scheme for Promoting the Culture of Low-Salt-Low-Sugar Diets in the Community”; and holding discussions with the trade on product reformulation, etc.

CRSS is of the view that we cannot expect the public to change their dietary habits overnight. Considering the actual circumstances of Hong Kong, CRSS believes that the first and foremost task at this stage is to promote a culture of low-salt-and-sugar diet, which will see the public gradually change from a high-salt-and-sugar diet to a relatively healthier one. Such a change will generate the demand for low-salt-and-sugar food and stimulate proactive response from the food trade. CRSS has advised the Government to work with all of the stakeholders to further cultivate a culture of low-salt-and-sugar diet in the community along the three directions of “starting from an early age”, “enhancing transparency of information”, and “strengthening publicity and education”. The Food and Health Bureau and the Centre for Food Safety agree with the recommendations of CRSS. For details of these recommendations, please see LC Paper No. CB(2)263/17-18(05).

In addition, members of CRSS and its three working groups actively took part in the activities co-organised by CRSS, including sitting on the assessment panels of various competitions, speaking on radio programmes and appearing on YouTube videos to provide expert advice on salt and sugar reduction and to promote relevant messages.

The average attendance rate of non-official members for CRSS formal meetings is 63% with breakdown as follows:

CRSS Attendance Rate	No. of Members
100 %	2
80 – 99 %	8
50 – 79 %	6
20 – 49 %	5
Less than 20 %	1

“Salt/Sugar” Label Scheme for Prepackaged Food Products

In designing the “Salt/Sugar” Label Scheme for Prepackaged Food Products (the Scheme), the Government and CRSS have drawn reference from the experience and similar schemes in overseas countries, including the “traffic light” labelling scheme¹ of the United Kingdom. We believe that the acceptance of trade operators and their active participation are important first steps in the implementation of a voluntary labelling scheme in Hong Kong. After taking into account all relevant factors, we have adopted the simple, clear labels highlighting low salt, no salt, low sugar, and no sugar in the “Salt/Sugar” Label Scheme for Prepackaged Food Products, which was launched in October this year. All prepackaged food products and drinks in compliance with the definitions of “low sodium (salt)”, “no sodium (salt)”, “low sugar” and “no sugar” under the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W) (the Regulations) can display the prescribed labels. We expect that prepackaged food products with such labels will be available in the market soon, enabling consumers to make wiser choices. We also hope to encourage the trade operators to provide more low-salt and low-sugar food products for the public through this Scheme.

It is estimated that there are more than 200 prepackaged food products and drinks available in the market which comply with the definitions of “low sodium (salt)”, “no sodium (salt)”, “low sugar” or “no sugar” under the Regulations. Among them, about 200 products (e.g. yogurt, biscuits, milk, juice) meet the criteria of “low sodium (salt)” or “no sodium (salt)”, and about 60 products (e.g. biscuits, milk, soya milk) meet the criteria of “low sugar” or

¹ The “traffic light” front-of-pack labelling scheme is implemented in the United Kingdom on a voluntary basis, in which the green, amber and red colour coding is used to show the content of four nutrients (i.e. fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt) per 100g/ml of the food/drink (green means low, amber means medium, and red means high).

“no sugar”. The above information comes from the “Database of Prepackaged Snacks”² jointly developed by the Hong Kong Nutrition Association and the Department of Health. We are planning to conduct a survey in order to obtain more comprehensive information about prepackaged food products currently sold in major local retail outlets which meet the definitions of “low sodium (salt)”, “no sodium (salt)”, “low sugar” or “no sugar” under the Regulations.

After the “Salt/Sugar” Label Scheme for Prepackaged Food Products has been in operation for some time, we will review its implementation as well as the response of consumers and the trade to see whether there is a need to enhance the Scheme for better result.

Yours sincerely,



(Carey YEUNG)
for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c. Controller, Centre for Food Safety, Food and Environmental Hygiene
Department (Attn.: Dr Samuel YEUNG)
Director of Health (Attn.: Dr Anne FUNG)

² The items in the Database of Prepackaged Snacks are “snacks of choice” or “snacks to choose in moderation” in accordance with the “Nutritional Guidelines on Snacks for Students” (2014) issued by the Department of Health, containing no caffeine and sweeteners, and not exceeding 125 kcal for each individually packed food item or not exceeding 250 ml per drink.

Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food (CRSS)
Membership List

Chairperson

Mr Bernard Charnwut CHAN

Vice-Chairperson

Dr MAK Sin-ping

Non-official Members (in alphabetical order)

Mr Alfred CHEUNG Kin-ting

Mr Langton CHEUNG Yung-pong

Professor KWAN Hoi-shan

Professor Annisa LEE LAI Chun-hing

Mr LAM Chiu-wing

Ms Sylvia LAM See-way, Chairperson of Working Group on Publicity and
Education

Dr LAU Suet-ting

Mr LEE Yuen-hong

Professor Ronald MA Ching-wan, Chairperson of Working Group on Lowering
Content of Salt and Sugar in Food

Mrs Elizabeth MOK LEE Mi-yu

Ms Jo NGAI Yee-shan

Dr Grace POON Wing-kit

Dr Ricky SZETO Wing-fu

Dr Terry TING Ho-yan, Chairperson of Working Group on Reducing the
Dietary Intakes of Salt and Sugar

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

Working Group on Lowering Content of Salt and Sugar in Food
Membership List

Chairperson

Professor Ronald MA Ching-wan

CRSS Members (in alphabetical order)

Mr Langton CHEUNG Yung-pong

Professor KWAN Hoi-shan

Ms Sylvia LAM See-way

Dr LAU Suet-ting

Mrs Elizabeth MOK LEE Mi-yu

Dr Terry TING Ho-yan

Mr Clory WONG

Co-opted Members (in alphabetical order)

Mr CHAN Kin-lin

Professor Ruth CHAN

Mr Kenny CHIU

Dr Vicki FONG Lai-ying

Mr Allen HO Shiu-woon

Dr WONG Man-sau

Professor Jean WOO

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

Working Group on Reducing the Dietary Intakes of Salt and Sugar
Membership List

Chairperson

Dr Terry TING Ho-yan

CRSS Members (in alphabetical order)

Mr Langton CHEUNG Yung-pong

Professor KWAN Hoi-shan

Ms Sylvia LAM See-way

Dr Grace POON Wing-kit

Dr Ricky SZETO Wing-fu

Mr Raymond TONG

Mr Jason WONG Ho-yin

Mr Kelvin YAU

Co-opted Members (in alphabetical order)

Dr CHAN Shou-ming

Mr Kenny CHIU

Dr Dawson FONG To-sang

Professor Alice KONG

Professor LAM Tai-hing

Professor Edmund LI

Mr Marco LO

Mr WONG Wing-chi

Mr YEUNG Wai-sing

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Representative of Food and Health Bureau

Representative of Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Representative of Department of Health

Representative of Education Bureau

Working Group on Publicity and Education
Membership List

Chairperson

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Mr LAM Chiu-wing

Dr LAU Suet-ting

Professor Ronald MA Ching-wan

Mrs Elizabeth MOK LEE Mi-yu

Ms Jo NGAI Yee-shan

Mr Clory WONG

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Mr Jason WONG Ho-yin

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Mr Kenny CHIU

Ms Doris LAU Pik-shan

Ms Catherine LEE

Dr Jimmy LOUIE

Professor Leo SIN Yat-ming

Miss Florence YU

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

Summary of Meeting Dates of the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food and its Three Working Groups

2015	March	1 st meeting of the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food (CRSS)
	July	2 nd meeting of CRSS
	November	1 st meeting of Working Group on Lowering Content of Salt and Sugar in Food (Working Group A)
		1 st meeting of Working Group on Reducing the Dietary Intakes of Salt and Sugar (Working Group B)
	December	1 st meeting of Working Group on Publicity and Education (Working Group C)
		2 nd meeting of Working Group A
		2 nd meeting of Working Group B
2016	January	3 rd meeting of Working Group A
		3 rd meeting of CRSS
	March	2 nd meeting of Working Group C
	August	3 rd meeting of Working Group C
	November	CRSS meeting with overseas and Mainland experts
2017	April	4 th meeting of Working Group A
	May	4 th meeting of Working Group C
	June	3 rd meeting of Working Group B
	July	4 th meeting of CRSS
	September	5 th meeting of Working Group C