

Healthy Beverage Policy

Introduction

The regular consumption of Sugar Sweetened Beverages (SSBs) by New Zealanders is a growing concernⁱ. This concern is supported by evidence that shows regular consumption of SSBs is strongly associated with a number of adverse health outcomes including unwanted weight gain leading to obesityⁱⁱ, type two diabetesⁱⁱⁱ and tooth decay in children^{iv}.

SSBs are high in sugar, for example a 330ml carbonated soft drink (a can of “fizzy”) contains almost nine teaspoons of sugar. SSBs are nutrient poor, and energy from them is less satiating than that obtained from solid foods, resulting in increased consumption^v. Almost one-fifth of the total sugar intake of New Zealand adults (17%) comes from non-alcoholic beverages, while younger children (5-14 years) obtain nearly a quarter (24%) of their daily sugar intake from beverages^{vi}. The World Health Organization issued guidelines in March 2015 recommending adults and children reduce their daily intake of free sugars^{vii} to less than ten per cent of their total energy intake. A further reduction to below five percent, or roughly six teaspoons (25g), a day would provide additional health benefits^{viii}.

In November 2015 the Community Development Committee received a deputation from MidCentral District Health Board proposing that Palmerston North City Council (Council) ban the sale of SSBs from its premises and major Council-run community events.

Strategic Context

This policy contributes to Council’s draft vision of *small city benefits, big city ambition* as specified in the draft *healthy community plan*.

The overall goal of the policy is that more people will freely choose water over SSBs. To create a smooth transition the policy recommends alternatives to SSBs including 100% fruit juices and artificially sweetened carbonated drinks. There is ongoing debate over the use of artificially sweetened drinks as a substitute for SSBs and some experts say these drinks can also lead to the same issues created by SSBs^{ix}. Experts are divided on this topic and there are still a number of agencies who support artificially sweetened beverages as a healthier option to SSBs, including the MidCentral DHB, Waitemata District Health Board^x, and the Auckland Council^{xi}. It may be that further research on this topic informs later versions of this policy.

Policy Objectives and Goals

The objective of the policy is to encourage the provision of healthy beverage choices with a view to contributing to improved health for those within the Council organisation, and to model good health behaviours for the wider community, so that:

- Fewer people consume SSBs;
- Water becomes the preferred beverage choice within Council and Council funded events and functions; and
- Awareness is raised about the adverse health effects of the regular consumption of SSBs.

Definitions

1. **Sugar Sweetened Beverage** is any beverage that has had calorific sweetener, usually sugar, added prior to sale. The main categories of sugary drinks include but are not limited to carbonated soft drinks/fizzy drinks, sachet mixes, fruit drinks, cordials, flavoured milks, cold teas/coffees, and energy/sports drinks.
2. **Sale** means beverages sold in exchange for money (for example beverages for sale in a cafeteria).
3. **Supply** means beverages provided for consumption without the exchange of money (for example beverages provided as refreshments at a Library afterschool program).

Guidelines

Recommended Beverages

4. While water is always the recommended option in some circumstances alternative beverage choices are necessary particularly at Council funded events and functions where alcohol is available. Therefore the following alternative beverage choices are recommended for sale and supply:
 - a. 100% fruit juice
 - b. Unsweetened Milk
 - c. Artificially sweetened carbonated drinks; and
 - d. Zero sugar carbonated drinks.

Council Owned Premises

5. SSBs will not be sold at the following Council owned premises:
 - a. All Palmerston North City Libraries; and
 - b. All Community Centres.
6. Contractors providing SSBs for sale at the following Council premises have the option to voluntarily replace SSBs with recommended beverages in this policy, until such a time as contracts can be negotiated:
 - a. Civil Administration Building;
 - b. Palmerston North Conference and Function Centre;
 - c. Central Energy Trust Arena; and
 - d. Lido Aquatic Centre.
7. All future contracts and negotiations will comply with this policy unless it would be unreasonable to do so and a report to Management Team outlining the reasons will be required.

Council Funded Events and Functions

8. All events and functions that are funded by Council will ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent the sale of SSBs. Reasonable steps include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Where possible select a venue that has the recommended beverages in this policy for sale only;
 - b. Negotiate with venue managers, whether the recommended beverages in this policy could replace SSB for sale during the event/function ; and/or
 - c. Invite vendors to the event/function on the condition that they do not sell SSBs.
9. All events and functions that are funded by Council will ensure that only water or the recommended beverages in this policy will be supplied.
10. Council will encourage the free provision of drinking water at events and functions that are funded by Council, and advertise this availability.

Exclusions

11. The following are outside the scope of this policy and are therefore excluded:
 - a. Hot beverages including but not limited to coffee, tea or hot chocolate;
 - b. Beverages that are already subject to an age restriction;
 - c. Events and functions that are not funded by Council;
 - d. Council social housing premises; and
 - e. Commercial leases of Council owned premises which are not considered to be Council-associated operations.

Implementation

12. Council will promote this policy to all Council owned premises and facilities and encourage voluntary compliance for those premises not included in clause 5.
13. An internal Council Management Team policy will be developed, taking into account the objectives and goals of this policy.

Review

The policy will be reviewed after two years, and thereafter every three years, or earlier if requested by Council.

ⁱ Ni Mhurchu, C., Eyles, H., Genc, M., & Blakely, T. (2014). Twenty percent tax on fizzy drinks could save lives and generate millions in revenue for health programmes in New Zealand. *The New Zealand Medical Journal*, Vol 127, No 1389. Retrieved from <http://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/otago066842.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Poppitt, S. D. (2015). Beverage Consumption: Are Alcoholic and Sugary Drinks Tipping the Balance towards Overweight and Obesity? *Nutrients*, 7(8), 6700-6718. doi:10.3390/nu7085304.

ⁱⁱⁱ Imamura, F., O'Connor, L., Ye, Z., Mursu, J., Hayashino, Y., Bhupathiraju, S., & Forouhi, N., (2015), Consumption of sugar sweetened beverages, artificially sweetened beverages, and fruit juice and incidence of type 2 diabetes: systematic review, meta-analysis and estimation of population attributable fraction. *BMJ*, 2015;351:h3576.

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- ^{iv} Ministry of Health, (2015). Background information on evidence and options for interventions to address childhood obesity in New Zealand. Pg 13. Retrieved from https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/hr_20151047_-_attachment.pdf
- ^v Ni Mhurchu, C., Eyles, H., Genc, M., & Blakely, T. (2014). Twenty percent tax on fizzy drinks could save lives and generate millions in revenue for health programmes in New Zealand. *The New Zealand Medical Journal*, Vol 127, No 1389. Retrieved from <http://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/otago066842.pdf>
- ^{vi} University of Otago and Ministry of Health. 2011. A Focus on Nutrition: Key findings of the 2008/09 New Zealand Adult Nutrition Survey. Wellington: Ministry of Health
- ^{vii} Free sugars refer to monosaccharides (such as glucose, fructose) and disaccharides (such as sucrose or table sugar) added to foods and drinks by the manufacturer, cook or consumer, and sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit juice concentrates.
- ^{viii} World Health Organization, (2015). *Guideline: Sugars intake for adults and children*. Geneva.
- ^{ix} Powell, S. (2015, September 30). Health board targets soft drinks. *Stuff*. Retrieved from <http://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/food-wine/72525489/Health-board-targets-diet-soft-drinks>
- ^x *Waitemata Beverage Guideline*. Retrieved from <http://www.arphs.govt.nz/Portals/0/Health%20Information/Nutrition%20and%20Healthy%20Eating/82420%20Beverage%20guidelines%20Brochure.pdf>
- ^{xi} The University of Auckland. (2016, July 27). *Strong leadership on sugary drink ban in Auckland* [Press Release]. Retrieved from <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/news-events-and-notice/news/news-2016/07/strong-leadership-on-sugary-drink-ban-in-auckland-.html>