

Demme Simkin
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Ref: H201906779

Dear Demme

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 24 July 2019 for:

*"I would like information and advice on a potential sugar tax for NZ.
Should selective taxes be imposed upon foods and beverages with a high sugar and/or fat content to discourage their consumption and internalise their social/health costs?"*

There are no immediate plans to implement a tax on sugary or fatty foods and beverages in New Zealand to influence the choice of individuals. The Ministry of Health (the Ministry) continues to monitor international evidence and practice in this area.

The Government is looking at ways to reduce the amount of sugar and fat in processed food and drink. This will rely on industry self-regulation and individual responsibility for their own sugar and fat intake.

Achieving this will require a partnership between the Government, the food and beverage industry, and health-care providers. The Minister of Health, Hon Dr David Clark, has met with industry representatives and requested their assistance in the challenge of tackling obesity in New Zealand. More information on this work is available on the Ministry's website by searching 'food industry taskforce'.

The Ministry's Eating and Activity Guidelines provide evidence-based population health guidance on eating well. The guidelines give advice for the New Zealand population that meets key nutrient needs, helps to maintain a healthy body weight, and helps prevent chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and cancer. They are available on the Ministry's website by searching 'eating activity guidelines for adults'.

The Ministry engaged the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research to write a report on sugar taxes in 2017. The report provides an assessment of the evidence for sugar taxes as a fiscal instrument to improve health. You might be interested to read the report which is publicly available at: <https://nzier.org.nz/publication/sugar-taxes-a-review-of-the-evidence>

I trust that this information fulfils your request. You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D Woodley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D'.

Deborah Woodley
Deputy Director-General
Population Health and Prevention