



Obesity News

Number 195, 31 January 2015

Obesity News has links to recently published news stories relating to obesity prevention from a variety of online sources.

New Zealand

Bariatric surgery

[NZ set to become fattest country – surgeon](#)

New Zealand is on target to become the fattest nation on earth within five years, according to weight loss surgeon Steven Kelly in a NZ Medical Journal editorial. He said stomach stapling operations were effective and saved money in the long run, but the Government was not providing enough of the life-saving procedures. The head of internal medicine at Auckland Hospital, Robyn Toomath, says morbidly obese people have serious problems and deserve better treatment. And Professor Boyd Swinburn said funding more operations should not come at expense of programmes aimed at preventing obesity.

[Listen to Robyn Toomath on Morning Report](#), (3 min)

Source: RadioNZ, 30 Jan 2015

[Kiwis miss out on weight-loss surgery](#)

Kiwis have far less access to life-saving weight-loss surgery than our slimmer Aussie cousins, sparking accusations of a "fattist" culture.

[In:](#) New Zealand Medical Journal editorial, 30 Jan 2015 (Subscription required)

Source: Dom Post / Stuff, 30 Jan 2015

Sugar

[Kiwis See Sugar as Public Health Enemy #1](#)

Results from Southern Cross Health Society's annual health survey show that almost two thirds (63%) of respondents believe they should consume less sugar and 73% believe it is a contributing factor to the country's obesity problem. However, there is only limited support for the government taxing unhealthy food and drink.

Source: Southern Cross Health Society / Scoop, 14 Jan 2015

[Kiwis going sour on sugar](#)

More than a third of Kiwis believe fizzy and other sugary drinks should be taxed, a Southern Cross Health Society survey indicates.

Source: New Zealand Herald, 15 Jan 2015

[Kiwis have sweet tooth for sugary soft drinks](#)

Figures from Euromonitor International show New Zealanders are drinking sugary soft drinks at an alarming rate. Gerhard Sundborn, from lobby group Fizz, comments.

Source: Stuff, 20 Jan 2015

[Fizzy drinks going at Whanganui Hospital](#)

Sugary drinks at Whanganui Hospital should be gone by the end of February.

Source: Wanganui Chronicle, 27 Jan 2015

[MDHB to ban sale of sugar-sweetened drinks](#)

MidCentral District Health Board is to ban the sale of sugar-sweetened drinks from its premises by 7 April.

Source: MidCentral Health, 30 Jan 2015

NZ – Other

[Supermarket sting exposes misleading claims](#)

Consumer NZ is calling for better food labelling after a supermarket sting on products claiming to be good for your waistline. The group found examples of foods promising they were low fat but were high in sugar - lulling people into thinking they were buying healthy options. Sue Chetwin said the voluntary Health Star Rating system introduced last year should be mandatory so shoppers could easily understand what they were buying.

Source: NZ Herald, 25 Jan 2015

[Tackling the growing obesity epidemic: a general practice perspective](#)

This policy document focuses on doctor-patient interaction in managing and preventing obesity, but also stresses the need for supportive environments to help people make healthy food choices and develop physical activity habits. "Curbing the obesity epidemic requires the concerted action of government, society, the food industry, health professionals, individuals and families. In addition to acting individually and medically, GPs may also act collectively and in a community-focused way to influence changes to societal and industry factors contributing to the development of obesity. For instance, GPs may play an advocacy role at the local level (e.g. engaging with schools or sporting events) or higher."

Source: Royal NZ College of General Practitioners, Dec 2014

Australia

Poll on unhealthy food

[Australia: Tackling obesity: Aussies want change](#)

A nation-wide opinion poll showed 85% of those polled believed unhealthy eating habits are now a major problem for Australian children. Half approved of taxing junk food/sugary drinks. Over three quarters support making it compulsory for all packaged foods to have a health star rating.

Source: Consumers Health Forum of Australia

[Health star rating system for packaged food should be compulsory: poll](#)

Making a health star rating compulsory for all packaged foods has attracted the overwhelming support of respondents in a national poll. And almost two-thirds of those polled agreed that "the food industry seems to have more say than the government over the regulation of food".

Source: Sydney Morning Herald, 20 Jan 2015

[Health groups want fat, sugar tax introduced in Australia to lower obesity](#)

The Consumers Health Forum, the Heart Foundation, the Obesity Policy Coalition and the Public Health Association of Australia are calling on the government to take decisive action to end the widespread marketing of junk food and drink.

Source: Daily Telegraph, 20 Jan 2015

Food marketing

[Australia: Junk food ads saturate cricket](#)

Junk food branding is being shown thousands of times during cricket broadcasts, a study has shown, prompting calls for Cricket Australia to phase out sponsorships with unhealthy brands.

Source: Sydney Morning Herald, 29 Jan 2015

[Australia: Public health experts blast Canberra Raiders for McDonald's advertising](#)

Public health experts have criticised the Canberra Raiders for allowing McDonald's to place coupons and advertising on tickets to a trial rugby league match, fearing it will encourage obesity. Tickets feature a "buy a Big Mac get one free" coupon, valid for two weeks in ACT and Queanbeyan restaurants. Curtin University's Prof Mike Daube said the promotion was a "double hit that not only links unhealthy products with sport, but encourages extra consumption of junk food".

Source: Canberra Times, 25 Jan 2015

Fuss about a playground

[Australia: Junk food at South Melbourne playground causes controversy](#)

Some angry parents have criticised a Melbourne council for banning junk food at a playground, saying local government should not be telling them what their children can eat. Port Phillip Mayor Amanda Stevens said that the "junk food-free zone" at

Skidders Adventure Playground was to complement council's healthful eating initiatives for disadvantaged families living in nearby public housing. Free fruit and vegetables are also handed out at the park.

Source: Herald Sun, 14 Jan 2015

[Port Phillip playground junk food ban in place for years, mayor says](#)

The South Melbourne playground is the only one in Port Phillip to have a junk food ban. The policy is part of a healthy eating programme for disadvantaged children. Parents "strongly" supported the ban.

Source: The Weekly Review Bayside & Port Phillip, 14 Jan 2015

[Australia: Kids and junk food don't play nicely together](#)

"The City of Port Phillip should be applauded for putting in place initiatives that promote healthy eating, safeguard children's health, and support parents in making healthy choices. It would be great to see a similar junk food policy applied in other playgrounds and other councils across Australia."

Source: Parents Jury blog, 19 Jan 2015

[Australia: Keep sport areas free of junk food: poll](#)

A Victorian dietician is calling for junk food to be banned from all local playgrounds and sporting facilities in a bid to combat childhood obesity.

Source: Border Mail, 15 Jan 2015

Australia – Other

[Obesity in Australia is growing at an alarming rate](#)

Obesity rates published last year in the medical journal The Lancet revealed that Australia's obesity levels are on par with the United States, but slightly less than New Zealand. The study showed that 63 per cent of Australian adults and 25 per cent of all children are overweight. As a result, health experts have called on the government to intervene by establishing a national anti-obesity strategy.

Source: Australian Business Review, 28 Jan 2015

[Queensland election 2015: Tackling obesity is biggest health issue says AMA](#)

The Australian Medical Association in Queensland said obesity was costing the state economy more than A\$11.6 billion every year. Their election platform includes banning fast food outlets from opening within one kilometre of new schools and subsidising fruit and vegetables for at risk communities.

Source: News.com, 15 Jan 2015

[Australia: Study finds lives and money to be saved from incidental exercise](#)

A Melbourne study found that incidental physical activity from active transport, such as walking to catch the train to work or cycling to the shops, can save lives and money.

[In:](#) Health Promotion Journal of Australia, Dec 2014

Source: Deakin University, 12 Jan 2015

[Research finds caffeine increases soft drink consumption](#)

Researchers at Deakin University are calling for tighter regulation around caffeine as a food additive after finding that its presence in beverages such as Coca Cola and energy drinks increases the amount of soft drink consumed.

[In:](#) British Journal of Nutrition, Jan 2015

Source: Deakin University, 16 Jan 2015

United Kingdom

Sugar

[UK: Coca Cola London Eye re-brand slammed by health charities as 'inappropriate'](#)

The London Eye has been lit up red as part of a two-year sponsorship deal with Coca Cola, and renamed the Coca Cola London Eye. Volunteers from the Children's Food Campaign were at the London Eye handing out 500 toothbrushes to families visiting the attraction. According to a group member, "It's totally inappropriate for a major family attraction to be sponsored by a sugary drinks company."

Source: The Independent, 19 Jan 2015

[UK: Selling out, the Coca-Cola London Eye](#)

Dr John Middleton, vice-president at the Faculty of Public Health, said: "Coca-Cola is the flagship for sugar marketing and therefore the flagship for rotten teeth and diabetes. They're taking over a high-visibility attraction and a major [London] icon."

Source: Daily Mail, 19 Jan 2015

[UK: Jamie Oliver: Sugar can destroy lives and should be taxed like tobacco](#)

Sugary foods risk causing a public health crisis similar to smoking and should be taxed in the same way as tobacco, Jamie Oliver has said. He agreed with France's decision to impose a tax on sugary drinks and believes Britain should follow.

Source: The Telegraph, 3 Jan 2015

[UK: Energy drinks banned from city sports centres](#)

Energy drinks are being banned from every public sports centre in Edinburgh under plans to limit children's access to high-caffeine beverages.

Source: Edinburgh Evening News, 6 Jan 2015

UK – Other

[UK: British Heart Foundation calls for junk food ads ban before 9pm watershed](#)

The British Heart Foundation has called for a ban on junk food ads before 9pm. A survey conducted by the foundation showed that 70% of parents with children aged four to 16 were immediately pressured to buy junk food their children saw advertised on TV. The poll of over 2,100 UK parents also revealed that 43% were "badgered by their children at least once a week" for more junk food.

[In:](#) The 21st Century Gingerbread House, 25 Dec 2014

Source: International Business Times UK, 23 Jan 2015

UK: The Observer view on our health and the sugar-peddling food industry

“The state has to play a far more dynamic role than Labour envisages or the coalition provides, to ensure that what does us good, at a price we can afford, becomes the established framework for a healthy life.”

Source: The Guardian, 18 Jan 2015

UK: Health campaigners call for stricter rules on ‘junk food’ TV adverts

Health campaigners are renewing calls for stricter restrictions on “junk food” ads after a survey revealed most parents were pestered for sweet, salty and fatty treats their kids had seen during television commercial breaks

Source: The Guardian, 26 Jan 2015

UK: 'Healthy obesity' does not last - study

The notion of potentially healthy obesity is a myth, with most obese people slipping into poor health and chronic illness over time, according to a new study. It describes the natural course of ‘healthy obesity’ over 2 decades.

[In:](#) Letter, Journal of the American College of Cardiology, 5 Jan 2015

Source: Health Day News, 5 Jan 2015

UK: Child obesity rates 'levelling off' among under-10s

The rise in childhood obesity in England may be beginning to level off in the under-10s, a study suggests. Obesity rates among 11- to 15-year-olds are still rising.

[In:](#) Archives of Disease in Childhood, 29 Jan 2015

Source: BBC News, 29 Jan 2015

United States

US: Girls who drink more sugary drinks start their periods earlier, study suggests

Harvard University researchers say that frequent consumption of beverages with added sugar may be associated with earlier periods.

[In:](#) Human Reproduction, Online 27 Jan 2015

Source: Washington Post, 29 Jan 2015

US: This is the no. 1 driver of diabetes and obesity

A primary driver for type 2 diabetes is sugar, according to a new report. Added fructose in particular may pose the greatest problem.

[In:](#) Mayo Clinic Proceedings, Online 29 Jan 2015

Source: Time, 29 Jan 2015

US: FTC not surveying junk food marketing to kids

The Federal Trade Commission has given up on tracking how much the food industry spends to promote sugary cereal, snacks and other less than healthy foods to children, a major setback for advocates who wanted a crackdown on junk food marketing to kids. Their last attempt, in 2012, [found](#) the industry giants spent some US \$1.8 billion on kid- and adolescent-targeted advertising in 2009.

Source: Politico, 31 Dec 2014

International

[WHO's Commission meets to develop global responses to obesity epidemic](#)

WHO's Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity held its second meeting on 13–14 January 2015.

Source: WHO, Jan 2015

[WHO versus noncommunicable \(chronic\) disease: where's the sugar target?](#)

Public health nutritionist Professor Marion Nestle comments on two WHO reports released recently aimed at preventing non-communicable diseases. She says that although the [second report](#) is all about reducing sugar intake, the [first report](#) is about everything but. “The omission is glaring. Could politics be involved? It’s hard to think of any other explanation.”

Source: Food Politics, 28 Jan 2015

[Physical inactivity and obesity: relative contributions to an earlier death](#)

A major European study has estimated that almost 700,000 deaths occurred in Europe in 2008 as a result of physical inactivity. This was about half the deaths resulting from obesity as measured by Body Mass Index (BMI), but similar to that for “abdominal obesity” as assessed by waist circumference. The greatest impact of physical inactivity on mortality occurred in those with a normal BMI or lower waist circumference.

[In](#): American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 14 Jan 2015

Source: New Zealand Herald, 16 Jan 2015 (good summary)

[Turkish governor 'bans' elevators in public buildings in fight against obesity](#)

One Turkish province is banning people from using lifts to reach the first three floors of public buildings in a move to promote better health and reduce energy costs. Hospitals and nursing homes are not subject to the new rules and people unable to climb the stairs for medical reasons are also exempt.

Source: The Independent, 2 Jan 2015

[Mexico's sugary drink tax turns 1 year old](#)

Mexicans are consuming fewer sodas, juices and flavoured waters since a nationwide sugary drink tax took effect in 2014. The policy aims to help curb rising rates of obesity and diabetes in Mexico. This article reviews the Mexican initiative.

Source: International Business Times, 11 Jan 2015

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