

Attitudes towards Sugar and Sweeteners - UK - September 2019

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“The continued government and media spotlight has put sugar firmly on consumers’ radars as an ingredient to scrutinise. This is also fuelling widespread efforts to limit or reduce sugar in their diet. This underscores that sugar reduction remains an imperative for food and drink operators, not just to meet government measures, but because of consumer demand.”
– Anita Winther, Research Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- Careful communication is needed to combat concerns sparked by sugar reduction
- Strong interest in learning about differences between types of sugar and sweeteners
- Simplicity is in high demand in communicating sugar content

The spotlight on sugar shows little sign of abating, this ingredient now firmly front of mind for consumers. 65% of UK adults are concerned about the amount of sugar in their diet and 60% report that they are actively taking steps to limit or reduce this. There is little doubt of the imperative need for the industry to develop lower-sugar variants to respond to this consumer demand and government pressure alike.

However, concerns linger around how sugar reduction is achieved, highlighting transparency as a key aspect in ensuring consumer buy-in to NPD in this space. While negativity endures around sweeteners, high consumer interest in understanding more about different sugars and sweeteners points to opportunities to build acceptance by putting more information forward on these ingredients.

Transparency on how brands achieve cuts to sugar content is needed to help brands keep consumers on side as they look to meet government targets, given widespread concerns about how sugar reduction is achieved.

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This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

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The facts

The implications

Strong interest in learning about differences between types of sugar and sweeteners

The facts

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Simplicity is in high demand in communicating sugar content

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The Market – What You Need to Know

Sugar remains key foe in fight against obesity

2019 Change4Life campaign focuses on sugary food swaps

Scientific study raises doubts over artificial sweeteners' benefits

Government consults on HFSS promotions and advertising

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Sugar remains in the spotlight in fight against obesity

'Sugar tax' on soft drinks comes into force

PHE tasks food industry with sugar reduction

Calls for sugar tax on food

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2019 Change4Life urges parents to swap to less sugary foods

People are cutting back on sugar, but sweet tooth remains strong

Scepticism towards artificial sweeteners persists

Scientific study raises doubts over artificial sweeteners' benefits

University study finds artificial sweeteners to be 'toxic' to gut microbes

Government consultations on HFSS promotions and advertising

Restrictions on promotions and in-store placement are suggested

Further HFSS advertising restrictions on the cards

Lower prices see EU sugar production reduced

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Flavoured water and energy drinks see biggest uptick in sugar claims

Breakfast cereals ramp up sugar reduction

Yogurts use differing approaches to cut sugar

Sweet treat categories add L/N/R sugar options

A variety of approaches to sugar reduction in chocolate

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Flavoured water and energy drinks see biggest uptick in sugar claims

Flavoured water has largest share of L/N/R sugar launches

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Sugar reduction ramps up in breakfast cereals

Breakfast cereals look to inulin and chicory root fibre

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Yogurts use differing approaches to cut sugar...

...sweeteners...

...fruit content...

...and plain flavours

Müller develops new culture to cut sugar content

Sweet treat categories add L/N/R sugar options

Leading brands launch L/N/R sugar variants in sweet biscuits and cakes

2018 sees wave of lower-sugar ice cream launches

Sugar and gum confectionery sees slight uptick in claims

Chocolate brands use fibre, protein and food tech to reduce sugar

Nestlé develops porous sugar particles

Various brands look to protein

Cadbury adds fibre to Dairy Milk

Napolina, Loyd Grossman and Heinz add no-added-sugar sauces

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Most people are concerned about sugar

Artificial sweeteners are a concern for half of the nation

Consumers' perceptions of their sugar intake diverge from official data

Three in five are limiting/reducing sugar, scratch cooking is top step

Moderation is more common than choosing L/N/R sugar options

Traffic light labelling is consumers' top choice to understand sugar

36% would find sugar shown in teaspoons/cubes helpful

Transparency and caution needed for sugar reformulation

Naturally occurring sugars are accepted, but regulation limits use

Not all sugars are seen to be equal

Sweeteners struggle

Concerns about Ingredients in Food and Non-alcoholic Drinks

Two in three are concerned about sugar

Women, higher earners and parents are most concerned

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Artificial sweeteners are a concern for half of Brits...

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...but half also deem them safe

Naturally sourced sweeteners do not avoid scepticism

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Just 28% think they eat too much sugar...

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...but perceptions diverge from reality

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Three in five are limiting/reducing sugar

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Scratch cooking is top step taken to limit/reduce sugar

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Moderation is commonplace

47% choose reduced/no-sugar options

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Traffic light labelling is top choice in helping people understand sugar

Familiarity and intuitive nature help traffic light labelling

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Voluntary adoption could stave off firmer actions

36% would find sugar shown in teaspoons/cubes helpful

Three in 10 are interested in certifications

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Attitudes towards Sugar and Sweeteners

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Naturally occurring sugars are accepted, but regulation limits use

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Honey has the strongest positive image

Cost poses a barrier to use of honey

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Sweeteners struggle

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