

11 December 2014 Last updated at 00:29

223 Share f t e

'Sugar worse than salt' row erupts

By **Smitha Mundasad**
Health reporter, BBC News



Experts claim avoiding sugar could be more important than avoiding salt when it comes to your heart

Scientists have clashed over claims that sugar may be worse for blood pressure and heart health than salt.

US experts say people need to place a greater focus on cutting sugar intake and suggest the benefits of lowering salt levels are "debatable."

Their arguments are published in the journal *Open Heart*.

But other researchers have said the claims are "disingenuous" and "scientifically unnecessary". They maintain both need to be reduced.

Focus on fructose

Researchers from St Luke's Mid America Heart Institute, and Montefiore Medical Centre in the USA reviewed a selection of evidence from basic science experiments, animal studies and human research.

They came to the conclusion that sugar - particularly fructose - may play a stronger role in high blood pressure and other cardiac conditions than salt.

And they say lowering salt consumption under certain levels may do more harm than good.

The research team suggests attempts to reduce salt in processed food may drive people to eat more.

But Prof Francesco Cappucco, at the University of Warwick, said: "The emphasis on reducing sugar and not salt is disingenuous.

Related Stories

Campaigners vow to cut sugar in food

WHO: Sugar intake 'should be halved'

Five foods surprisingly high in sugar



The emphasis on reducing sugar and not salt is disingenuous"

Prof Francesco Cappucco
University of Warwick

Top Stories



Poorest pupils jump in three Rs test NEW

- Superbugs to kill 'more than cancer'**
- Bush 'fully informed' of CIA methods**
- Law to end child abuse 'grey area'**
- HK police move on main protest camp**

Features



30 deadly days
Tracking a month of jihadist attacks



The ASMR craze
The people who get a strange tingling feeling



What truce?
Why Germany barely remembers the 1914 WW1 Christmas Truce



Life, death and me
The moment a little boy with Ebola vomited on me



Just Jessica
Ennis-Hill on Ched Evans, post-baby life and Rio 2016
BBC SPORT

Most Popular

Shared

- | | |
|---|----------|
| Malala receives joint Nobel award | 1 |
| Storm hits power and travel in UK | 2 |
| Comets 'not source of Earth's water' | 3 |
| Theatre sends porn DVDs to children | 4 |
| Nearly 50% take prescription drugs | 5 |

Read

- | | |
|--|----------|
| Eric Garner death: 76 arrested at London Westfield demo | 1 |
| Angela Wrightson murder: Girls aged 13 and | 2 |

"Both should be targeted at population level for an effective approach to cardiovascular prevention.

"The shift in attention from salt to sugar is scientifically unnecessary and unsupported."

Prof Tom Saunders, at King's College London, said: "Cutting salt intake and losing weight will lower blood pressure, but the evidence for a direct effect of added sugar is tenuous.

"Salt intake has fallen in the UK as manufacturers have reduced the amount of salt added to food. This has also been accompanied by a fall in blood pressure.

"Added sugar intake is derived mainly from sugar-sweetened beverages, confectionery, cereal products such as cakes and biscuits.

"The easiest way to reduce added sugar intake is to limit sugar-sweetened beverage and confectionery consumption."

Fruit and vegetables

The US experts focus on a particular type of sugar - added fructose - often found in processed foods and sugary beverages.

But they say naturally occurring sugars in whole foods, for example those in fruit and vegetables, are not a cause for concern.

Data from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey in England suggests most adults and children eat more sugar than recommended.

The World Health Organization recommends sugars should make up less than 10% of total energy intake per day - this works out at about a maximum of 50g (1.7oz) of sugar for the average adult.

But the global health body recently acknowledged that halving this, to 5% of total energy intake per day, would have additional benefits.

More on This Story

Related Stories

[Campaigners vow to cut sugar in food](#) 09 JANUARY 2014, HEALTH

[WHO: Sugar intake 'should be halved'](#) 05 MARCH 2014, HEALTH

[Five foods surprisingly high in sugar](#) 09 JANUARY 2014, MAGAZINE MONITOR

Related Internet links

[Open Heart - BMJ Journals](#)

[Sugars - Live Well - NHS Choices](#)

The BBC is not responsible for the content of external Internet sites

Share this page

223 [Share](#) [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) [p](#)

More Health stories



Superbugs to kill 'more than cancer'

Drug resistant infections will kill an extra 10 million people a year worldwide by 2050 unless action is taken, a study says.

14 charged	4
President George W Bush 'knew everything' about CIA interrogation	3
Online child abuse: Law to end 'grey area'	4
Joey Barton reveals death threat letter on Twitter	5
Google to shut Spanish news service	6
France crash: Alpha Jet hits home for disabled in Vouvray	7
Viewpoint: Christmas is not for trivialising war	8
Jihadist violence 'killed 5,000 in November'	9
ASMR: The videos which claim to make their viewers 'tingle'	10

Video/Audio

▶ Kabul suicide bomb caught on CCTV	2
▶ Afghanistan's answer to Bruce Lee	3
▶ Frozen-inspired lights in Dagenham	4
▶ Shipping Forecast 'weather bomb' tour	5
▶ BBC News Channel	6
▶ Bringing Elvis's Graceland to the UK	7
▶ Why are dog attacks on the rise?	8
▶ Huge waves crash on Orkney Islands	9
▶ Strong storms hit across northern UK	10