

Covid-19 & Obesity

Implications for diet and nutrition in the Caribbean

*Healthy Caribbean Coalition
Thursday 27 August, 2020*



Suzanne Soares-Wynter
Clinical Nutritionist



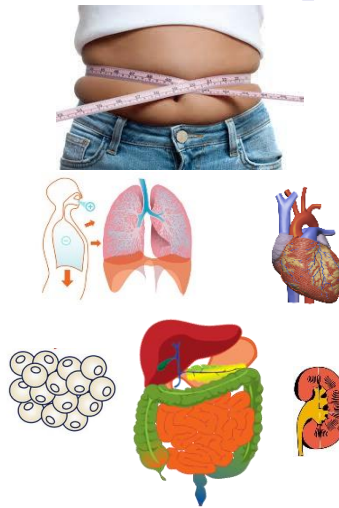
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
AT MONA, JAMAICA



Obesity increases susceptibility for severe COVID-19 Infection

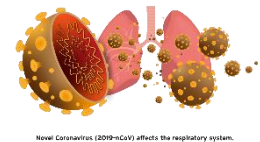
Unhealthy
diets
&
lifestyle

Obesity



Multiple organ &
Tissue damage
Inflammation &
Reduced immunity

COVID-19



CAIHR
ASSOCIATION FOR
HEALTH RESEARCH

Is the pandemic enabling unhealthy diets & obesity?

Food Supply Chain Disruptions

Consumer behaviours

Unhealthy food environment

Food system control mechanisms



Un/intended exposures?

“....long lines waiting for fast food”

“....students to receive meals from chain (fast food) restaurants”

“.....sugary drinks for frontline workers and vulnerable groups”

“...donations of sugar to elderly and poor relief groups”

COVID-19 within an obesity epidemic

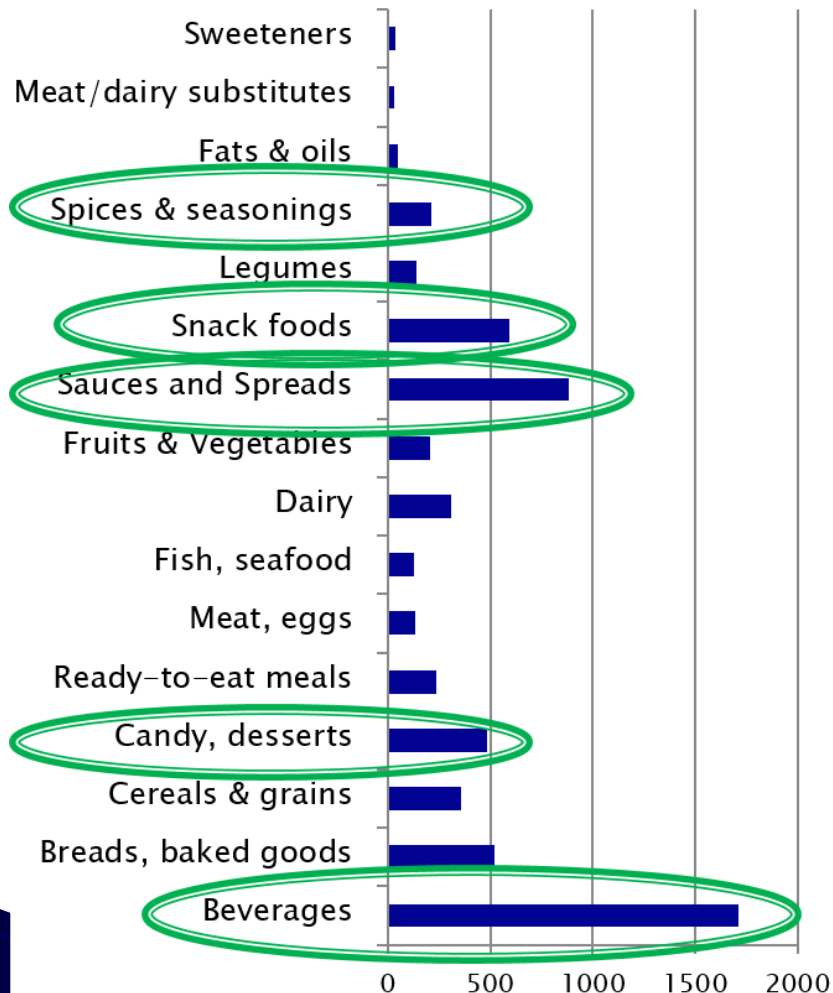


Existing Risk factors

- ▶ 1 sugary drink/day
- ▶ Fast foods
- ▶ Low fruits & vegetables
- ▶ Sedentary
- ▶ Micronutrient deficiencies
 - Anemia (iron)
 - “Hidden hunger”
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Food insecurity

Retail food landscape (Jamaica)

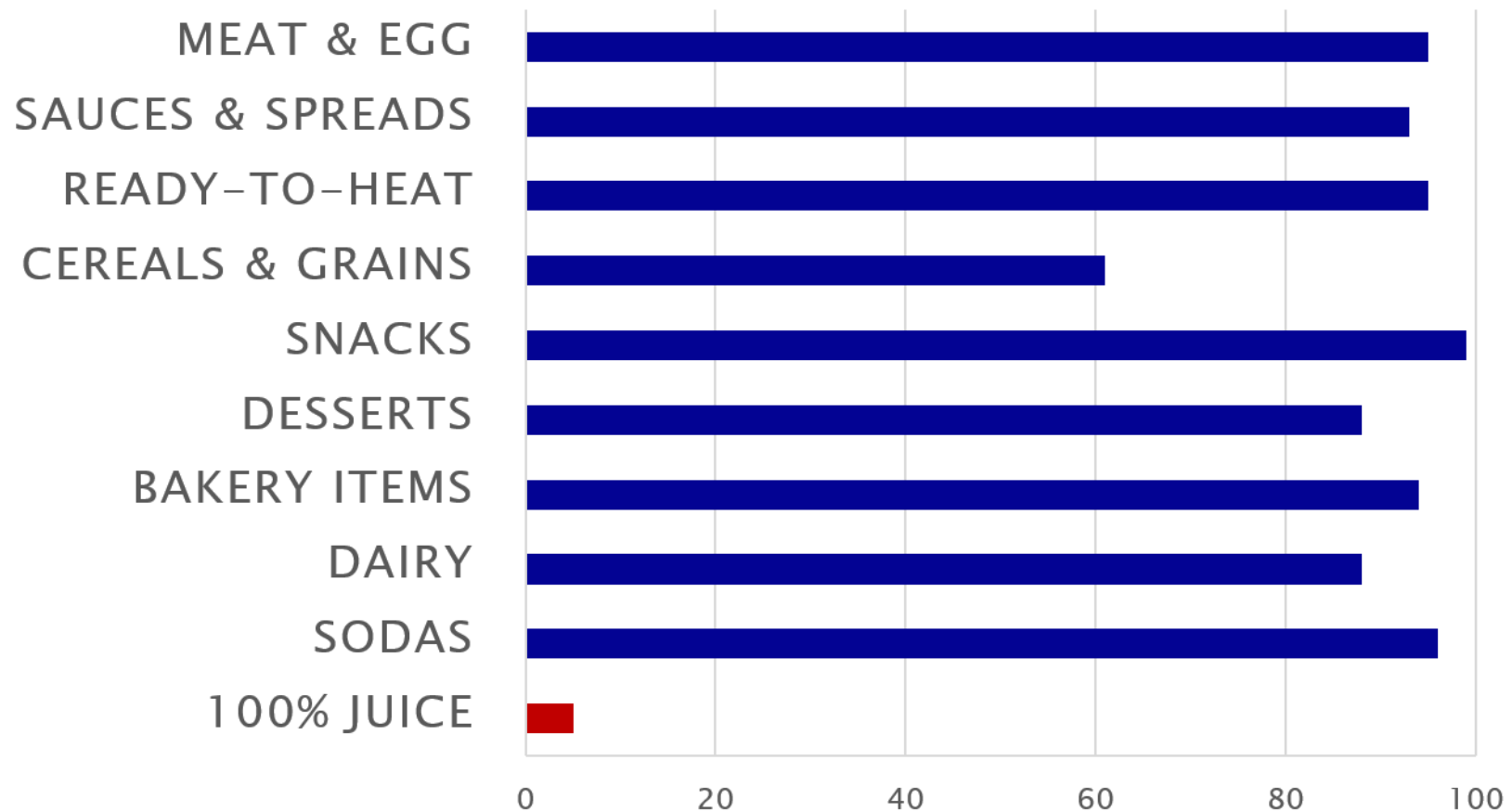
– *Variety of foods & beverage categories*



- Primarily processed & ultra-processed products
- 12% with erroneous food labels (i.e. missing or incorrect information)

Database = 6261 products

% Processed foods & beverages with excess unhealthy nutrients



Health-focused food environment

– *Striking a (comprehensive) balance*



Nutritious & plant-based diet

Limit ultra-processed foods & beverages



Physical activity



Agricultural/Farming Initiatives

Corporate & social responsibility



Meal support programmes

Mental & emotional health



Control mechanisms



Protection during the pandemic

- ▶ Optimize nutritional status and immune protection
- ▶ Secure health & food environments
 - *Home*
 - *Schools, worksites*
 - *Community*
 - *National*
 - *Regional*
- ▶ Support healthy food & nutrition policy actions
- ▶ Protect vulnerable groups



Make the healthy choice
your preferred choice.



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
AT MONA, JAMAICA

CAIHR
CARIBBEAN INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH