Our Food, Our Health, Our People

Supporting healthy food policies in the Caribbean

Dr. Anselm Hennis
Director, Non-communicable diseases and mental health
Pan American Health Organization
Age-standardised intake of dietary factors among adults aged 25+ years at the global and regional level in 2017

Age-standardised intake of dietary factors among adults aged 25+ years at the global and regional level in 2017

What we eat matters

• in 2017, dietary risks were responsible for 11 million deaths (22% of all deaths) among adults
• Cardiovascular disease was the leading cause of diet-related deaths (10 million deaths) among adults;
• Globally, consumption of nearly all healthy foods and nutrients was suboptimal,
• Daily intake of all unhealthy foods and nutrients exceeded the optimal level globally
• Diets low in whole grains was the most common dietary risk factor for death
• High intake of sodium is a leading dietary risk for death
• Globally, sub-optimal intake of three dietary factors - whole grains, fruits, and sodium/salt - account for more than 50% of diet-related deaths
Breastfeeding and Infant & Young Child Feeding Policies based on WHO Recommendations

Key messages:

• Critical importance of the first 1000 days of life
• High prevalence of overweight/obesity among Caribbean children
• Risks for child obesity
  • maternal factors: diabetes, obesity, pregnancy weight gain;
  • Infant factors - high birthweight; lack of breast feeding;
• Disparities: low income
• Focus on promoting good dietary and physical activity habits
School Nutrition Policies and Standards

Components:

- School Recognition
- School curriculum
- Food services environment
- Physical activity environment
- Health promotion
- School health services

Preventing child overweight/obesity:

- Importance of the school environment – nutrition and physical activity impact weight outcomes
- Active parental engagement linked to better weight
- Nutrition education programs (focused; context and age-specific) are beneficial
- Healthy environments for nutrition are key – increase healthy foods and beverages and reduce unhealthy UPP/junk foods and SSB
- 60 minutes of physical activity daily; tackle sedentarism

Available from: https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/schools/en/
Support for Healthy Policies and Norms

- Policies coherent with a healthy diet
- Healthy environments – schools, workplaces
- Healthy food shopping, preparation, and consumption

- Reduce the demand for and offer of food and drink products of public health concern:
  - Salt/sodium
  - Fat, trans fat, saturated fat
  - Sugars

- Development and implementation of norms
  - Dietary guidelines
  - Front-of-package labeling with nutrient content information that promotes healthy choices
FRONT-OF-PACKAGE LABELING (FOPL) SYSTEMS:

IDENTIFY, IN A QUICK, EASY AND CORRECT WAY, PRODUCTS THAT ARE IN EXCESS OF CRITICAL NUTRIENTS (THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH NCDs): FREE SUGARS, FATS (TOTAL, SATURATED, TRANS), SALT/SODIUM

ENDORSEMENT SYSTEMS:

MONOCHROMATIC/COLOR GDA:

OCTAGONAL WARNING LABELS

PAHO NUTRIENT PROFILE MODEL:

Source: PAHO. FOPL as a policy tool for the prevention of Noncommunicable Diseases in the Americas. Available here:
https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/52740

https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/53328
Current Status of the CROSQ Process to Develop a CARICOM Standard including FOPWL

- **REGIONAL TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE (RTSC)** comprised of 11 Member States (ATG, BRB, BHS, DMA, GUY, HAI, JAM, KNA, LCA, SUR and TTO), and **NATIONAL MIRROR COMMITTEES (NMCs)** established by the National Bureau of Standards in all CARICOM MS.

- NMCs may comprise 7 categories of stakeholders, including **industry** and **commerce**.

- **RTSC produced a Final Draft CARICOM Regional Standard (FDCRS), which retains the octagonal warning labels and the PAHO Nutrient Profile Model.**

- Voting by all CARICOM Member States during the period, extended to 30 June

- If approved by at least three quarters of MS, it will be presented to the **CROSQ Council** for approval and subsequently to the next appropriate and available CARICOM Council of Ministers for approval as a CARICOM Regional Standard.
Conclusions

• The Caribbean Region must invest in moving towards sustainable food production and food systems as a priority.

• A key investment for Caribbean parents to control childhood obesity is to provide appropriate nutritional support, including breast feeding, during the first 1000 days of a child's life.

• Safeguard the school environment and promote nutrition and physical activity.

• What we eat matters - sub-optimal intake of **three dietary factors** - *whole grains, fruits, and sodium/salt* - account for more than 50% of deaths due to dietary factors.

• FOPWL is an evidence-based method – and the octagon shaped ‘HIGH IN’ system is supported by robust scientific data from the Caribbean – and it empowers the consumer with the ‘right to know’ facilitating informed choices.