

SCOTS SCOFF 1BN CAKES EVERY YEAR

A BIG, FAT SLICE OF A HEALTH DISASTER

Country's 103,000-ton biscuit tin sparks emergency warning

Julie-Anne Barnes

Sugar-hungry Scots are eating one billion cakes every year, according to government figures.

The 103,000-ton mountain of sweet fatty food is the equivalent of almost 200 cakes for every man, woman and child annually.

Campaigners have called for urgent action to help curb the levels of consumption which are linked to the country's spiralling obesity epidemic.

Latest Scottish Government figures show 981million cakes, pastries and biscuits were bought by Scottish households last year.

Despite campaigns encouraging people to make healthier choices, sales have remained around one billion since 2010.

Obesity Action Scotland's Lorraine Tulloch said: "We consume three times the amount of sugar we should. Added sugar increases palatability. Cutting down could reduce overall calorie intake."

"Even a small reduction can make a difference, for example cutting down on confectionery, biscuits, soft drinks and savoury snacks by a third could reduce a person's daily calorie intake by 120."

The worrying findings of the Obesity Indicators report for 2014, published last month, are likely to add to calls for a tax on unhealthy food in Scotland.

But ministers say there are no plans to introduce one and there are concerns that such a policy would be likely to fall foul of the European courts.

Lorraine believes hiking the cost of unhealthy snacks isn't the only answer. She added: "Any tax would need to be part of a package of measures."

"We also need to think about the placement of these foods in shops, the price and the portion size."

"January is a month when people try to start a healthier lifestyle. We would urge people to consider their diet and cut down on unhealthy foods and replace them with fresh or dried fruit or unsalted nuts."

Half of the sugar we consume comes from confectionery, cakes, biscuits, pastries, savoury snacks and sugary drinks.

There is evidence that obesity is associated with eating too much of these foods.

Two-thirds of Scots are already overweight or obese.

When First Minister Nicola Sturgeon was health secretary, she warned Scotland was in the grip of an obesity epidemic and if trends continue, 40 per cent of Scots would be obese within 20 years.

By the end of 2014, there were almost 250,000 people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes which is linked with obesity and lifestyle.

Public health minister Maureen Watt said they were working with the food and drink industry.

She said: "Key areas for action are around labelling, promotions, responsible marketing of food and drink and a focus to reduce calories, salt, fats and added sugar."

"The Scottish Government have no plans to introduce a sugar tax



No way to sugarcoat the facts

1 billion cakes, pastries and biscuits eaten by Scots each year

200 for every man, woman and child in the country



290 million litres of fizzy drinks purchased by Scots households last year



66% of adults in Scotland are overweight

27% officially classed as obese

50% of women are at risk of obesity related disease



18 average dress size for women in Scotland

33% of men at risk of obesity related disease

1 in 2

Scots will get cancer. The risk could be significantly cut through improved diet

244,050 people in Scotland with Type 2 diabetes, which is linked to diet and lifestyle



WEIGH TOO MUCH Scots are feasting on a billion cakes every year and two-thirds of us are too heavy
Picture Getty Images

"We are consuming three times the amount of sugar we should

and we do not currently have direct power to do so.

"We are taking an evidence-led approach and we're awaiting with interest the outcome of three reviews on the health effects of taxes on unsaturated fat, sugar and sugar-sweetened beverages."

"Work is under way to examine what other measures would have the greatest impact on obesity rates and which we could

implement within our current powers."

Medical experts say weight loss operations should double - to around 400 a year.

Glasgow University Professor Naveed Sattar said: "I don't think we are doing enough. I would like to see us double the number."

"I would like to see us do at least one a day. There are many patients who would benefit."