



Tiger Brands responds to Minister's call for sodium reductions

The Minister of Health has called for a reduction in sodium in processed foods, but Tiger Brands points out that a concurrent educational campaign is necessary.

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South African Minister of Health Dr Aaron Motsolaedi has called for regulations to limit salt in processed foods, including bread, breakfast cereals, processed meats, butter, salty snacks and soups and stocks.

The draft regulation under section 15(1) of the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act, 1972 specifies the maximum levels of salt allowed in specific food categories, in a two-phased approach requiring a certain reduction by 2016 and another by 2018.

“It is, however, worth remembering that salt is used in food manufacture for many technical reasons like the curing of meat and food stability, and is not only added to enhance taste, says Stella Papadopoulos-Fenster, nutritional consultant for Tiger Brands. “So the proposed regulation has significant implications for food production and safety.”

She also points out that it is important to ask the fundamental question of what is the best approach to reduce unhealthy levels of salt consumption. Salt added in cooking and at the table seems to be the dominant source of salt consumption – far more than processed food content. This is especially true in developing countries.

“Because of this, much global intervention has been to educate and change behaviour, and this seems to be more effective than regulation alone,” says Papadopoulos-Fenster. “Although the Minister's objective is honourable and well intentioned, at the same time, or even before legislated salt reduction takes place, there need to be education and behavior changes.”

Tiger's Eat Well Live Well campaign

Tiger Brands uses sodium in many of its products, and has implemented the Eat Well Live Well (EWLW) system where the amount of salt is indicated in a GDA table on all packaging, to assist our consumers in regulating their salt intake.