



**Paper for information: Paper on Saturated Fat  
recommended level**

**Agenda item: 4**

Please see attached paper for discussion.

## **PAPER FOR DISCUSSION AND AGREEMENT: RECOMMENDED MAXIMUM INTAKE FIGURES FOR SATURATED FAT TO SUPPORT CONSUMER AWARENESS INITIATIVES**

### **Purpose**

The Food Standards Agency is planning, as part of its Saturated Fat and Energy Intake Programme, to develop consumer facing initiatives to raise awareness of the health impacts of consuming too much saturated fat and to encourage consumers to reduce their intakes.

Members are asked to consider the proposal for a recommended maximum intake figure of 20g of saturated fat for adults and young people 7 years of age and over, and a figure of 15 g of saturated fat for young people from 5 years of age to 6 years (see Annex) that could be used for consumer communication purposes. A final decision about the way in which the figures may be used has yet to be made; however, it is recognised that it would be crucial that the use of any such figures must be presented appropriately.

### **Proposal for Recommended Maximum Intake Figures for saturated fat**

Using data on actual food energy intakes from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS)<sup>1</sup> to reflect current dietary habits and COMA's recommendation that for adults no more than 11% of food energy should be derived from saturated fat<sup>2,3</sup>, it is possible to derive a recommended maximum intake in grams for saturated fat for adults. This equates to 19 g for women and 26 g for men and correspond to the recommended maximum intakes based on the Estimated Average Requirement for energy for adults (refer to the Annex).

For young people, recommendations for saturated fat intakes as a percent of food energy have not been formulated; however, the COMA recommendation on saturated fat intake for adults should be appropriate for young people from the age of five years. Therefore, using the actual food energy intakes from the NDNS<sup>4</sup> and COMA's recommendation that no more than 11% of food energy should be derived from saturated fat, it is possible to calculate a recommended maximum intake in grams for saturated fat for young people as follows (refer to the Annex):

	<b>Recommended Maximum Intake for Saturated Fat (g/day)</b>	
	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
<b>4-6 years</b>	19	17
<b>7-10 years</b>	22	20
<b>11-14 years</b>	24	21
<b>15-18 years</b>	27	20

The recommended maximum intakes for young people calculated on the Estimated Average Requirements for total energy correspond with those based on actual food energy intakes.

For communication purposes, the Agency proposes a figure of 20 g would be suitable for adults and young people aged 7 years and over, and a figure of 15 g for young people aged 5 years to 6 years. These figures represent an approximation to the recommended intake levels rounded for ease of recollection. While the figures proposed are lower than recommended maximum intakes based on actual energy intakes for some groups of the population (notably men and boys), this would not be inappropriate, given that there is no recommended minimum intake for saturated fat.

## **Background**

### ***The Saturated Fat and Energy Intake Programme***

The Agency has made a commitment to work with health departments/directorates and other stakeholders to reduce the population average intake of saturated fat from the current level of 13.3% of food energy<sup>1</sup> to below the COMA recommendation of 11% of food energy<sup>2,3</sup> by 2010. This commitment refers to everyone from age 5 years upwards in line with COMA advice that its recommendation on saturated fat applies in full from the age of 5 years<sup>5</sup>.

The Agency has developed a Saturated Fat and Energy Intake Programme to help deliver this commitment<sup>6</sup>. The consumer awareness activities of the Programme are central to improving consumers' diets, and will also contribute to the remaining themes of the Programme, particularly food reformulation and increasing the uptake of retailers' healthier ranges, by encouraging consumers to choose lower saturated fat options.

COMA's recommendations on saturated fat are expressed as a 'percent of food energy'. This is difficult to convey to consumers in a way that is meaningful and applicable to the information available to them when they make everyday choices about the food they buy.

Agency consumer research commissioned last year to inform the consumer awareness element of the Programme has identified a wide range of options for messaging styles about saturated fat that consumers find engaging and are more likely to encourage behaviour change. The research suggested that an indicative 'recommended maximum intake' figure in grams for saturated fat<sup>7</sup> might have a part to play although there are other options and no decisions on this have yet been taken.

Recommended intakes have been employed previously as part of consumer awareness initiatives for fruit and vegetables and salt.

## For Discussion

Members are asked to agree the recommended maximum intake of 20g for saturated fat for adults and young people aged 7 years and over, and a recommended maximum intake of 15 g for young people aged 5 years to 6 years, for potential use by the Agency in consumer awareness activity if appropriate.

## References

1. Henderson, L et al. 2003. The National Diet & Nutrition Survey: adults aged 19 to 64 years. Volume 2: Energy, protein, carbohydrate, fat and alcohol intake. London: HMSO.
2. Department of Health 1991, Dietary Reference Values for Food Energy and Nutrients for the United Kingdom. Report on Health and Social Subjects 41. London: The Stationery Office.
3. Department of Health 1994, Nutritional Aspects of Cardiovascular Disease. Report on Health and Social Subjects 46. London: The Stationery Office.
4. Gregory, J et al. 2000. National Diet & Nutrition Survey: young people aged 4 to 18 years. Volume 1: Report of the diet and nutrition survey. London: The Stationery Office.
5. Department of Health 1994, Weaning and The Weaning Diet. Report on Health and Social Subjects 45. London: HMSO.
6. The key proposals within the Programme are:
  - improving consumer awareness and understanding of healthy eating, with particular focus on the impact of saturated fat on health;
  - encouraging promotion and uptake of healthier options such as 'reduced fat' products and the retailers 'healthier' ranges;
  - encouraging accessibility of smaller food portion sizes; and
  - encouraging voluntary reformulation of mainstream products to reduce saturated fat and energy.
7. Saturated fat communication strategy research. CML Research. <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/satfatcommstrategy.pdf>

**Annex****Recommended maximum intakes based on actual food energy intakes (NDNS)**

		<b>Energy intake<sup>1</sup> (kcal/day)<sup>2,3</sup></b>	<b>Saturated fat recommendation based on actual energy intakes (g/day)<sup>4,5,6</sup></b>	<b>Recommended maximum intakes (g/day) for communication purposes</b>
<b>Children 4- 6 yrs</b>	Boys	1527	19	15
	Girls	1403	17	
<b>Children 7-10 yrs</b>	Boys	1785	22	20
	Girls	1606	20	
<b>Children 11-14 yrs</b>	Boys	1976	24	20
	Girls	1678	21	
<b>Children 15-18 yrs</b>	Boys	2239	27	20
	Girls	1599	20	
<b>Men</b>		2110	26	20
<b>Women</b>		1554	19	20

<sup>1</sup> Energy intake from food and drink, excluding energy from alcohol

<sup>2</sup> Gregory, J et al. 2000. National Diet & Nutrition Survey: young people aged 4 to 18 years. Volume 1: Report of the diet and nutrition survey. London: The Stationery Office.

<sup>3</sup> Henderson, L et al. 2003. The National Diet & Nutrition Survey: adults aged 19 to 64 years. Volume 2: Energy, protein, carbohydrate, fat and alcohol intake. London: HMSO.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Health 1991, Dietary Reference Values for Food Energy and Nutrients for the United Kingdom. Report on Health and Social Subjects 41. London: The Stationery Office.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Health 1994, Nutritional Aspects of Cardiovascular Disease. Report on Health and Social Subjects 46. London: The Stationery Office.

<sup>6</sup> Calculation = 11% food energy intake / 9, whereby 51 gram saturated fat provides 9 kcal.

**Recommended maximum intakes based on Estimated Average Requirements for Total Energy**

		<b>Estimated Average Requirement for total energy (kcal/day)<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Saturated fat recommendation based on EAR (g/day)<sup>4,5,6</sup></b>	<b>Saturated fat recommendation based on EAR (g/day), including energy from alcohol<sup>4,5,7</sup></b>	<b>Recommended maximum intakes (g/day)</b>
<b>Children 4-6 yrs</b>	Boys	1715	21	-	15
	Girls	1545	19	-	
<b>Children 7-10 yrs</b>	Boys	1970	24	-	20
	Girls	1740	21	-	
<b>Children 11-14 yrs</b>	Boys	2220	27	-	20
	Girls	1845	23	-	
<b>Children 15-18 yrs</b>	Boys	2755	34	-	20
	Girls	2110	26	-	
<b>Adults 19-50 yrs</b>	Men	2550	31	28	20
	Women	1940	24	22	
<b>Adults 51-59 yrs</b>	Men	2550	31	28	20
	Women	1900	23	21	
<b>Adults 60-64 yrs</b>	Men	2380	29	26	20
	Women	1900	23	21	

<sup>7</sup> Includes energy intake from alcohol in which case the maximum recommendation for energy from saturated fat is 10% of total energy. Therefore, calculation = 10% of total energy / 9, whereby 1 gram of saturated fat provides 9 kcal