

DROP THE SALT!

Campaign Bulletin

Issue 1 | November 2007

Salt Awareness Week - Chair of UK Food Standards Agency to visit Australia

Dame Deirdre Hutton, Chair of the UK Food Standards Agency, will speak at an event hosted by AWASH in Sydney during Salt Awareness Week on Thursday 31 January. The event is part of World Salt Awareness Week which is being promoted internationally by Consensus on Salt and Health (CASH) in the UK. The theme is salt in foods aimed at children and the fact that children should consume even less salt than adults. Further details and invitations to the event will be circulated shortly. If you have ideas or would like to be involved please contact Jacqui Webster on +61 2 9993 4520.

UK WASH Poster promoting Salt Awareness Week

Are your children overdosing on salt?

American blueberry muffin = 1.1g salt

sausage, baked beans and chips = 2.8g salt

This is a total of 3.9g of salt in one meal, more than a six year old should eat in a whole day.

A high salt intake in childhood leads to higher blood pressure and an increased risk of stroke and heart disease in later life. Give your children a good start and reduce their salt intake today!

Visit our website to download our leaflet **Salt and the health of your children**

CONSensus ACTION ON SALT AND HEALTH
EMAIL: cash@sgul.ac.uk WEBSITE: www.actiononsalt.org.uk

National Salt Awareness Week
January 28th - February 3rd 2008

Cherry Robinson/Outline 10/08/08

Salt reduction message reaches Parliament



Margaret May, MP – Federal Member for McPherson tabled a Motion in the House of Representatives calling on government to educate consumers about the danger of high salt diets in recognition of the serious adverse effects of salt on health. AWASH put out a media release welcoming the Motion and calling on all parties to make salt reduction part of their health promises in the run up to the election.

Margaret May has invited AWASH Chair, Dr Bruce Neal, to go to Canberra to meet her and discuss the issue further following the election.

Latest media releases and more available on AWASH website

AWASH has published several media releases over the last few months. These are available on the AWASH website www.awash.org.au. As well as background information on key salt issues, the web-site is regularly updated with:

- ▶ Recent national and international media coverage about salt and health
- ▶ AWASH positions statements
- ▶ AWASH campaign news.

Food industry strategy development

AWASH is working with stakeholders, including key players in the food industry on a comprehensive 5-year strategy to reduce salt in processed foods. The strategy will include proposals for:

- ▶ High level commitment from the food industry as a way of securing cross-industry action and providing top-down support for individual company policies
- ▶ Individual company agreements and action plans negotiated through a program of meetings

This bulletin will be published quarterly to bring stakeholders and supporters up to date with relevant issues. Further information can be found on the Drop the Salt! Campaign web-site at www.awash.org.au



- A **program of technical support**, including provision of guidance documents and, if feasible, direct exchange of technical expertise
 - A **consumer awareness strategy** to raise public awareness and promote good progress by the food industry
 - A **comprehensive monitoring program** to keep track of progress
- Informal consultation with stakeholders will take place from November and it is expected that the strategy document will be launched early next year.

Salt and the food service sector

As well as meeting with retailers and manufacturers, AWASH has been looking at the salt content of products in some of the major fast food chains and will be holding discussions with key players in this sector over the next few months.

Monitoring progress

AWASH is developing a comprehensive program to monitor progress against the overall strategy. This includes:

- **Annual consumer survey**
- **Regular media monitoring**

AWASH is also currently monitoring coverage of salt issues in popular consumer magazines and considering other ways of working more proactively with health and consumer journalists on salt issues.

- Assessment of situation in relation to **available data on dietary intakes**
- Collation of **baseline data on industry activities**
- Establishment of a **comprehensive processed food databank** to record and monitor sodium levels in major brands for the products that contribute most to salt in the diet.

Iodisation

AWASH submitted a response to FSANZ on Proposal P230—Consideration of Mandatory Fortification with Iodine. The submission is available to read at: http://www.awash.org.au/about_positionstatements.html.

FSANZ is waiting for further advice from health ministers before progressing with this proposal.

New supporters

AWASH is very pleased to welcome the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners as a new institutional supporter and Professor Bill Adam from the University of Melbourne, as an individual supporter.

For more information, or to sign-up as a supporter, visit: http://www.awash.org.au/about_supporters.html

Comment from AWASH Chair, Dr Bruce Neal



“Since the launch of AWASH Drop the Salt! in May 2007, we have seen the Campaign grow steadily, inviting serious response from the food industry, government and the media. Salt Awareness Week at the end of January will be another great opportunity to raise the profile of the issue even higher up the agenda of relevant stakeholders.

We are delighted to have Dame Dierdre Hutton, Chair of the UK Government’s Food Standards Agency, to visit Sydney and speak at an event hosted by AWASH on 31st January. We hope it will encourage increased and sustained action from industry organisations here to reduce salt and will be calling on the Australian government to act urgently on this serious issue.”

Bruce Neal is a Senior Director at The George Institute for International Health, Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Sydney and Chair of the Australian Division of World Action on Salt and Health. Bruce completed his medical training at Bristol University in the UK in 1990 and spent four years in clinical posts. Prior to taking up his position at the Institute in 1999, he spent four years working as an epidemiologist at the Clinical Trials Research Unit in Auckland, New Zealand, where he completed his PhD in Medicine. Bruce directs a major program of research at the Institute and is supported in his work by a Career Development Award from the National Heart Foundation and a Program Grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia. Bruce is a Fellow of the UK Royal College of Physicians.

International issues

- The European Commission has set up a high level political group on nutrition and will be calling on all Members States to make a commitment to reduce salt intakes
- CASH UK has recently released reports on salads containing high levels of salt and on the salt levels of products in different fast food chains (see www.actiononsalt.org.uk)
- American Medical Association released report calling for 50% cuts to salt levels in foods
- see <http://jama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/298/12/1439>.

Further details on international developments are included in the recent WASH newsletter at <http://www.worldactiononsalt.com/publications/newsletters.htm>

*For further information, to comment on anything in this bulletin or suggest issues for future **Drop the Salt!** bulletins contact Jacqui Webster on 02 9993 4520 or email jwebster@george.org.au*