

FISH HOEK VALLEY RATEPAYERS & RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating Fish Hoek, Clovelly and Sun Valley)

~~65B Central Circle, Fish Hoek 7975~~

Web: <https://www.fhvrra.org.za/> Facebook: www.facebook.com/FHVRRRA/

Heritage Western Cape: Conservation Body

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DEPT HEALTH DIRECTOR GENERAL: DR SARFATI DG@health.gov.za

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON STANDARD FRONT-OF-FOOD LABELLING

DUE DATE: 21 JULY 2023

The Fish Hoek Valley Ratepayers and Residents Association (FHVRRRA) feels it is bordering on criminal to not empower food consumers with knowledge about the products they are about to purchase. The other side is the education required to inform consumers about good food choices that benefit their health and doesn't lead towards certain non-communicable or non-healthy lifestyle diseases.

Standard front-of-food warning labels would be a great start in this process. The concomitant education could begin with informing South Africans that seeing fewer of these warnings will be better for their long-term health.



Pic: warning or “front of package” labels ¹

The case against high sugar content is well documented as it leads to obesity, type-2 diabetes, risk of heart disease and cancer, increase in depression, skin and cellular ageing, fatty liver, kidney disease, poor dental health, gout and cognitive decline, ²

Actually, we wish to change “Saturated FAT” to “Artificial Trans FAT” ³ as nutritious high fat food can be healthful. ⁴ Most often artificial trans fats or partially hydrogenated fats are the result of some industrial process, which is important to greedy food processing companies. These fats are chemically altered to stay solid at room temperature, which gives them a much longer shelf life, but are deleterious to good health, including heart disease.

1 <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-05-30-heres-why-you-should-care-about-the-food-industry-lobbying-the-health-department-behind-closed-doors/>

2 <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/too-much-sugar#depression>

3 <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/why-trans-fats-are-bad>

4 <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/saturated-fat>

The overuse of salt can cause chemical imbalances that can lead to death as it is the major factor contributing to stroke, oedema, stomach cancer and heart attacks in South Africa.⁵

Massive profits have been made selling us products high in sugar, salt, [trans] fat and added sweetener. We are seeing more and more people in our community suffering from diseases like type-2 diabetes and high blood pressure that can lead to stroke or heart disease.

The food industry will also lobby that food labelling costs will have to be passed onto consumers. Although this may be valid, we are more concerned about the health costs associated with poor diets.

Our children are targeted by adverts and marketing strategies that can influence what they eat for years.⁶ We are hoping for an opportunity to help change this through labelling.

We are concerned that food consumption shifts have been towards an overall increase in daily kilojoules consumed, a diet of sugar-sweetened beverages, an increase in the proportion of processed and packaged food including [trans fat] and added caloric sweeteners. This is a shift away from vegetables. The largest shifts in food consumption has been towards more convenience foods, such as soft drinks, sauces, dressings and condiments, sweet and savoury snacks and processed foods containing trans fats.⁷

SUMMARY

FHVRRA wishes everyone a healthy lifestyle. To this end, we'd like to see:

- mandatory front-of-food warning labels of legible size on all foods produced or processed by food companies with penalties for misinforming or not adequately informing consumers; and
- the Department of Health starting an advertising campaign to explain that the fewer of these warnings, the better the contents will be for consumers.

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DATE	15 June 2023

5 <https://www.news24.com/life/archive/7-reasons-why-too-much-salt-is-bad-for-you-20180215>

6 https://awethu.amandla.mobi/petitions/demand-warning-labels-on-all-unhealthy-food?utm_source=amandla&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=blast2023-06-12&source=AM-em

7 <https://sajs.co.za/article/view/3761>