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Agency welcomes US salt targets

Monday 11 January 2010



The Agency welcomes today's publication of voluntary salt targets by the New York City Health Department, which are part of the National Salt Reduction Initiative in the US.

New York City is co-ordinating the initiative, which includes 17 national health organisations and 26 cities, states and related bodies.

These targets will help guide the US food industry on what reductions are needed in order to cut people's salt intakes.

As in the UK, US consumers eat too much salt. A high intake of salt is linked to an increased risk of high blood pressure, which in turn can increase the chances of suffering from heart disease and stroke.

The US salt reduction work is voluntary and New York City has acknowledged that 'it is modelled after a successful initiative developed in the United Kingdom' and cites the Agency's salt reduction successes to show how it can work.

The Agency first published voluntary salt targets in 2006 and in the UK we have seen much success, thanks to the wealth of positive action taken by all sectors of the UK food industry. As a result of the salt reduction work over the past few years, we've seen a drop in the average daily intake of salt from 9.5g to 8.6g per person. This reduction saves more than 6,000 lives each year and £1.5bn to the economy.

The Agency very much hopes that the US sees similar success with its initiative and we look forward to the publication of its final targets in due course, following this consultation.

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