New Survey Reveals Shockingly High Levels of Salt in Pizza Both in UK & Worldwide. CASH Urges All Manufacturers to Act Now

Wednesday 17 December, 2014

Related Sectors:

Food & Drink :: Health ::

Scan Me:

- Half of all UK pizzas surveyed contain more salt per pizza than the UK daily maximum of 6g [REF 1]
- Five pizzas were found to contain 16g salt – the equivalent of 7 Big Macs!
- Some countries are being fed TWICE as much salt from the same pizza as in other countries
- Many pizzas now have MORE salt than they did 2 years ago [REF 2]

The latest survey by CASH (Consensus Action on Salt & Health) and WASH (World Action on Salt & Health) have found huge differences in the salt content of pizzas found in supermarkets, restaurants and takeaways both in the UK and worldwide [REF 3].

Half (48%) of all pizzas surveyed in the UK (612 out of 1,267) exceed the maximum recommended salt limit for an entire day (6g/day). This is despite a call to action in 2012 following a previous pizza survey [REF 4] AND new salt reduction targets being set by the Department of Health's salt pledge [REF 5].

The UK survey found that nearly three quarters (73%) of all restaurants and takeaway pizzas (586 out of 802) surveyed contain more salt per pizza than your entire maximum daily recommended salt intake. Takeaway pizzas including *Papa John's Stuffed Crust Sausage & Pepperoni* and *Domino's Hot Dog Stuffed Crust Pepperoni Passion pizza* contain as much as 16g salt per medium-sized pizza. That's equivalent to nearly 3 teaspoons of salt [REF 5], nearly 3 TIMES the recommended daily limit, and as much salt as you would find in 7 Big Macs! [REF 6]

Disappointingly, very little has improved in the last two years in the UK. CASH carried out a similar survey in 2012 and found that the majority of pizzas (59%) mentioned in both surveys have either remained the same or had in fact INCREASED in salt. For example, Sainsbury's Thin & Crispy Cheese & Tomato Pizza now has more salt than it did two years ago (0.88g/100g in 2012 vs 1.3g/100g in 2014). In 2012 Pizza Express were highlighted, as their restaurant pizzas were saltier than their pizzas sold in supermarkets. Now the values appear to be fairly similar to each other; unfortunately the salt content of their supermarket margherita and pepperoni pizzas have actually increased by as much as 0.3g/100g!

This demonstrates a complete halt in progress and a clear lack of commitment from the food industry. Many manufacturers continue to fail to meet the targets set out by the Department of Health for 2012, and have not signed up to the new Public Health Responsibility Deal Salt Reduction 2017 Pledge, including Domino's, Dr. Oetker, Iceland, Pizza Express and Goodfella's [REF 5]. Even worse, only one third (38%) of pizzas targeted to children in restaurants (11 out of 29) would meet the children's salt target of 1.8g/salt per portion.

There were, however, some success stories, for example Sainsbury's Thin & Crispy Pepperoni Pizza has been reduced by 0.57g/100g (1.35g/100g in 2012 vs. 0.78g/100g 2014) and Pizza Huts Medium Italian base Margherita Pizza (4.96g per pizza in 2012 vs 3.84g in 2014).

Sonia Pombo, nutritionist at CASH says, "Most of us aren't aware of how much salt we actually eat on a daily basis, and thus the danger we are putting ourselves in. With three-quarters of our salt intakes coming from processed foods such as pizza, how are any of us able to choose a healthier diet? We need the food industry to help us improve our diet, not to hide 3 times more salt than is recommended in a day in a single pizza!"

WASH (World Action on Salt & Health) reveals that the picture worldwide is just as worrying – perhaps even more so depending on which country you live in [REF 7]. WASH surveyed a total of 565 pizza products from supermarkets, takeaways and restaurants across 11 countries and found that almost half (310 out of 565) of the pizzas surveyed contained MORE salt than the 5g maximum limit as recommended by the World Health Organisation [REF 7].

For example, the saltiest pizza surveyed is the Pizza Hut Meat Lovers Thin N Crispy sold in the USA which contains 23.6g salt per large pizza, almost FIVE TIMES the WHO 5g limit [REF 8].

Further to this there were HUGE variations in the amount of salt in the same pizza sold in different countries. For example; people eating a Pepperoni Lover's Pan Pizza (22.20g salt/pizza) from Pizza Hut

in the USA would be eating over THREE TIMES more salt than people eating the same large pizza in New Zealand (6.58g salt/pizza).

"The fact that some pizza manufacturers are able to produce the same pizzas with much lower levels of salt demonstrates that there are no technical reasons why other pizza manufacturers can't also do so" says Clare Farrand, International Programme Lead at the World Action on Salt and Health. "We urge all pizza manufacturers to reduce salt in all pizzas to the lowest level in all countries if we are to tackle the huge and burdening problem of strokes, heart attacks and heart failure."

Professor Graham MacGregor, Chairman of CASH & WASH and Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine at Barts & The London School of Medicine and Dentistry "Eating too much salt puts up our blood pressure, the major cause of strokes, heart attacks and heart failure, the leading cause of death and disability worldwide, [REF 8]. Reducing salt intake around the world would save millions of lives each year.

"At the World Health Assembly in May 2013 it was unanimously agreed that all countries should reduce their daily salt intake by 30% towards a target of up to 5g per day, by 2025. Our survey has shown that many pizza manufacturers are still adding very large and completely unnecessary amounts of salt to their pizzas. This is completely unacceptable and our advice is to avoid eating pizzas from these manufacturers."

TIPS FOR CHOOSING A MORE HEALTHY PIZZA

- Opt for classic, thin crust pizzas. Thicker bases, as well as stuffed crust pizzas of the same variety/type, have much more salt in them, by as much as 1g per slice in some takeaways!
- Read the label! Most UK supermarket pizzas now have front of pack colour coded labels, so be sure to look for more greens and ambers, and less reds
- Choose pizzas with fewer meaty toppings e.g. salami, pepperoni etc. as they are high in salt, as is cheese. Choose more veggie options.
- In restaurants ask for less cheese on pizza, and replace with more vegetables. Pizzas should all be made fresh in restaurants, so you can change them to your preference.
- Why not try and make your own pizza with healthier ingredients, or best of all eat something else! View our recipes for some lower salt and fat suggestions

-Ends-

National PR - David Clarke: david@rock-pr.com M: 07773 225516

Website www.actiononsalt.org.uk

www.worldactionsalt.com
Tweet https://twitter.com/cashsalt #LessSalt

Notes to editors

Ref 1 – UK maximum recommended intake for salt is 6g a day.

Ref 2 – 59 pizzas were surveyed in both 2012 and 2014. Of these pizzas, 59% have either increased in salt content (23 pizzas) or remained the same (12 pizzas).

Ref 3 - Survey details for UK pizzas, full data tables are available with this release

The survey looked at 1,275 pizzas including margherita, ham & mushroom, Hawaiian, fish, pepperoni, other meats and vegetarian based pizzas from supermarkets and restaurants/takeaways with available nutritional information.

- Product data was collected from product packaging, online and from customer services from the leading supermarkets Aldi, ASDA, The Co-operative, Iceland, Lidl, Marks and Spencer, Morrison's, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose (473 in total) and the leading high street restaurant and takeaway chains, ASK Italian, Domino's, Papa John's, Pizza Express, Pizza Hut, Zizzi (805 in total). All pizzas sold in supermarkets and restaurants were surveyed, and only medium sized pizzas were surveyed from takeaway establishments.
- Figures in this release are based on the nutritional information provided.
- Suggested portion sizes varied from 1 slice to a whole pizza. As salt per 100g information was limited in restaurants and takeaway establishments, for comparison purposes we looked at salt content per whole pizza, as this is likely what most people would eat, particularly when eating out.

So as to compare with our pizza survey carried out in 2012, we surveyed medium pizzas in takeaway establishments. In our view it is likely most people would eat a whole medium sized pizza.
- 8 products available from Lidl provide no nutritional information.
- Data was collected in store from 22nd September 24th November and products in this release purchased between 5th and 12th December.

Ref 4 – CASH carried out a similar survey in 2012 looking at pepperoni and margherita pizzas sold in supermarkets and takeawayshttp://www.actiononsalt.org.uk/news/surveys/2012/Pizza12/70399.html

Ref 5 - The Public Health Responsibility Deal

1. A. Salt Reduction 2017 Pledge

https://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/pledges/pledge/?pl=49

CASH found that nearly half (49%) of all pizzas sold in UK supermarkets contain more than the Department of Health's recommended average salt target per 100g (1g/100g salt), nearly a fifth (19%) of which exceed the maximum target (1.25g/100g salt) [REF 3].

The salt target for pizzas is 1.00g salt/100g [range average], and 1.25g salt/100g [max]. This target has not changed from the 2012 target.

The pizza manufacturers mentioned in our survey that are not signed up to the Responsibility Deal 2017 Salt Pledge:

Chicago Town Cosmo's Dr. Oetker DS Gluten Free Gino's Frozen Foods Goodfella's Hungry Joe's Iceland Levi Roots Pizza Express The City Kitchen The Lab Pizza A full list of those signed up to the 2017 pledge can be found on the Responsibility Deal website

1. A. The Public Health Responsibility Deal Out of Home Maximum per Serving Salt Target

A full list of those signed up to the 2017 pledge can be found on the Responsibility Deal website

https://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/pledges/pledge/?pl=50

Targets for pizza are split into 4 sub categories:

10.1 Takeaway style pizza with cured meat toppings (per slice) – 1.25g salt

10.2 Take away style pizza with all other toppings (per slice) – 0.88g salt

10.3 Traditional Italian style pizza with cured meat toppings (per pizza) – 6g salt

10.4 Traditional Italian style pizza with all other toppings (per pizza) – 5g salt

Takeaway pizzas included in the survey were compared to either the 10.1 or 10.2 target (Domino's, Papa John's and Pizza Hut), and restaurant style pizzas were compared to either the 10.3 or 10.4 target (ASK Italian, Pizza Express, Pizza Hut and Zizzi).

Ref 6 – A McDonalds Big Mac® contains 2.3g salt per portion

http://www.mcdonalds.co.uk/content/ukhome/meal_builder.html

Ref 7 – WASH Pizza Survey Data 2014

- A total number of 565 products from across 11 countries: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Finland, Malaysia, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, UK and USA.
- These included 280 supermarket pizzas, 233 takeaway, 52 restaurant
- 54 different brands
- 465 pizzas had sodium/salt values per 100g
- 539 pizzas had sodium/salt values per portion
- Pizza toppings were categorised under the following categories: Pepperoni, Multi Meat, Meat, Fish, Multi Cheese, Margherita, Hawaiian and Vegetarian.

HIGHs and LOWs, Takeaway

- In 5 out of 8 popular pizzas topping categories sold from takeaways, USA was the highest (Pepperoni, Multi Meat, Margherita, Chicken, Vegetarian)
- In 5/8 popular pizzas toppings sold from takeaways, Canada was the lowest (Hawaiian, Healthy Choice, Multi Meat, Pepperoni & Vegetarian)

HIGHs and LOWs, Supermarket

- In 3/8 popular pizzas topping categories sold from supermarkets, New Zealand was the highest (BBQ Meat, Pepperoni, Vegetarian)
- In 2/8 popular pizzas toppings sold from supermarkets, Argentina was the highest (Margherita, Multi Cheese)
- In 2/8 popular pizzas toppings sold from supermarkets, New Zealand was the lowest (BBQ Meat, Multi Meat)
- In 2/8 popular pizzas toppings sold from supermarkets, South Africa was the lowest (Vegetarian, Hawaiian)
- In 2/8 popular pizzas toppings sold from supermarkets, UK was the lowest (Multi Cheese, chicken)

Ref 8 - World Health Organisation Guideline: Sodium intake for adults and children http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/guidelines/sodium_intake_printversion.pdf

Company Contact:

_

Pressat Wire

E. support[@]pressat.co.uk

View Online

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.wire.pressat.co.uk