

Are you OK?

READING Health experts call for sugar tax

Read the article about the campaign for a sugar tax in Britain. Complete the sentences (1–6) using a maximum of 4 words. Write your answers in the spaces provided. The first one (0) has been done for you.

Health experts call for sugar tax

The cost of treating illnesses related to bad eating habits in Britain is continuing to rise dramatically. It has been estimated that in 2015, £6 billion was spent on treating illnesses caused by obesity (overweight) and a further £10 billion was spent on treating diabetes. Now health experts want the government to do something about the problem of too much sugar in the diets of many British people, which can be linked to both obesity and diabetes. They think that the cost to the NHS (National Health Service) is much too high.

A so-called 'sugar tax' of 10% to 20% on products which contain large amounts of sugar, such as soft drinks, could help to solve this problem. However, in October 2015 the Prime Minister, David Cameron, said that he did not 'see the need' for such a tax, even though a report clearly showed a link between obesity and consuming sugary food and drinks.

Health experts are unhappy that the government hasn't done anything yet and want the 'sugar tax' to be introduced. They say this would, for example, help to reduce childhood obesity. The health experts are joined by a well-known campaigner, the celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, who was also disappointed that the government did not agree to the tax. For many years Jamie Oliver has tried to introduce healthier food choices in schools.

Recent research has shown that around 20% of children in the UK are obese by the time they finish primary school. Supporters of a sugar tax feel that this statistic is a strong argument for the government to rethink its decision.

However, it has also been suggested that there might be something even more effective than a



sugar tax: educational programmes on healthier eating and the dangers of consuming too much sugar. At the moment only around £638 million is being invested in programmes to stop obesity happening in the first place. This, campaigners say, is a tiny proportion of the money being spent on treating obesity-related illnesses. They want to educate youngsters to make healthier choices to cut down their sugar intake. There are also plans for parent education programmes.

Another possible solution to this growing problem could be increasing the amount of PE lessons in schools to encourage more children to get active. This, medical professionals argue, could help young people develop healthy habits for the future. Children may spend more time exercising and keeping fit rather than leading inactive lives in front of their televisions or computer screens. This, in turn, could lead to less childhood obesity.

For the moment, though, supporters of the sugar tax are hoping that the government will reconsider its policy. A recent survey showed that a large number (over 70%) of top managers in the health service are in favour of the tax. They emphasise that the shocking statistics on obesity prove that action must be taken, and soon.

0	In Britain more and more money is spent on _____ .	(treating) diet-related illnesses
1	Obesity and diabetes can be the result of _____ .	
2	According to David Cameron, a sugar tax _____ .	
3	For a long time, Jamie Oliver has tried to get schools to _____ .	
4	The sum spent on educational programmes _____ the cost of treating diet-related illnesses.	
5	Educational programmes could be useful for both _____ .	
6	Having more PE lessons could have a positive effect on _____ .	



Answer key

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- 1 (eating) too much sugar / a sugar-rich diet
- 2 isn't needed / isn't necessary
- 3 introduce healthier food / offer healthier (food) choices
- 4 is (much / considerably) lower than
- 5 children and adults / children and their parents
- 6 children's habits / children's fitness / childhood obesity