

Government of Pakistan
Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination

PRESS RELEASE

HEALTH MINISTER REQUESTS FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL EDUCATION MINISTERS TO BAN SALE AND SUPPLY OF SUGARY DRINKS TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Islamabad: October, 2018- Aamer Mehmood Kiani Federal Minister for National Health Services has requested the Federal Minister for Education and Provincial Education Ministers for KPK, Balochistan and Gilgit Baltistan to ban sale and supply of the sugary drinks to educational institutions, shopkeepers, canteens and drink corners in 100 metres of educational institution. In his letter, the Health Minister informed that Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), including heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and chronic lung disease, are collectively responsible for almost 68% of all deaths in Pakistan. In Pakistan, NCDs are causing 51% of total burden of diseases, mostly in young age group. This has resulted in significant burden in socio-economic status of our population & has increased the cost on our health care delivery system across the country.

He highlighted that Pakistan is obligated to achieve the targets set in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Under target 3.4, Pakistan has to reduce one third premature mortality from NCDs, by 2030. Simple cost effective measures could reduce the burden of NCDs, including incorporating exercise in the daily routine, having a balanced diet by **decreasing junk food consumption, decreased intake of sugar and salt** in everyday cooking and decreasing tobacco use.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), over-consumption of sugar is a major contributor to obesity, diabetes and tooth decay. Sugary drinks are a major source of sugar in the diet, and its consumption is increasing in most countries, especially amongst children and adolescents. A part from diabetes, obesity is a major risk factor for heart diseases, cancers and other diseases.

National Diabetes Survey of Pakistan 2016-17 revealed that more than 26 percent of the country's population, 27.4 million people over the age of 20, are suffering from type 2 diabetes and 14.47 percent are at risk of getting diabetes. Discouraging use of sugar rich diet ties in with Pillar 3 of the National Health Vision, 2025 that focuses on introduction of prevention programmes targeting NCDs.

In new recommendations from the American Heart Association, children ages 2 to 18 should eat or drink less than six teaspoons of added sugars daily, which are equivalent to about 100 calories or 25 grams.

The Minister said that banning sale and supply of sugary drinks (drinks with added sugar including carbonated soft drinks, sports drinks and energy drinks) to educational institutions is an effective supply reduction strategy being practiced all over the world. In Pakistan, Punjab Food Authority and Sindh Food Authority have already banned supply of the drinks to educational institutions, shopkeepers, canteens and drink corners in 100 metres of educational institutions. Same measures could be taken in Federal Area and other provinces.

The Minister requested the Ministers for Education to issue directions to the relevant authorities to ban sale and supply of the sugary drinks to educational institutions, shopkeepers, canteens and drink corners in 100 metres of educational institutions.

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