

Jamaica restricts sugar sweetened beverages in schools, health facilities

Language English

Graphic from the advocacy campaign, "Are you drinking yourself sick?" © Heart Foundation of Jamaica

The Government of Jamaica has restricted sugar sweetened beverages (SSBs) in the country's schools and public health facilities as of January 2019. Details are still to be announced, according to the [Healthy Caribbean Coalition](#) [1] (HCC).

The civil society organisation has congratulated the Ministry of Health (MOH) for the move. "The HCC strongly supports this policy measure, which is part of a wider strategy to combat the urgent epidemic of childhood overweight and obesity we are facing in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean.

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"This will be useful for other regional governments keen to follow the leadership of Trinidad and Tobago, Bermuda – and now Jamaica – in taking population-level policy measures to create healthier school environments," adds HCC in a letter to the MOH.

The Caribbean has the highest NCD mortality rate in the Americas with 40 percent of these deaths occurring prematurely before the age of 70 years. Obesity is a major underlying factor that contributes to the development of NCDs, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, the letter states.

1 in 3 Caribbean children overweight or obese

One in three Caribbean children are either overweight or obese, placing them on a trajectory for health complications in childhood and adolescence and increased risk of NCDs in adulthood.

"The HCC applauds the leadership of the Government of Jamaica in its actions taken to combat NCDs," concludes the letter. "It welcomes continued bold action in this area through further implementation of the WHO NCD Best Buys,

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and looks forward to your presence at the highest levels at the upcoming 3rd UN High0Level Meeting on NCDs in New York on 27 Sept. 2018.

[Visit HCC website.](#) [1]

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