

Sugar tax could save South Africans from their sugar addiction

According to Vanessa Ascencao, a top South African nutritionist, sugar should be classified as a Class A drug, as it is so highly addictive, devoid of nutrients and detrimental to the nation's health.



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She adds that science has proven that sugar is taking a devastating toll on our health and is so highly addictive that the language used to describe its effects, such as 'sugar highs', 'sugar crashes' and 'sugar cravings', mimic the descriptions of the effects of drugs.

She was responding to [a report](#) that the department of health is considering a 'sugar tax' to encourage South Africans to consume less.

"We are facing a health pandemic as the recent HSRC and MRC's national health survey exposed. Diabetes, obesity, cancer, heart disease and depression are dramatically on the rise. Unhealthy lifestyles, including the high consumption of sugar-laden and nutrient-depleted foods, are at the core of this health crisis. It's government's obligation to take action."

"Taxation should be part of a broader plan. Government should ensure healthy food, such as fruit and vegetables, is more affordable than nutrient-depleted food. This should be coupled with a national education drive on what to eat and the dangers of sugar and artificial sweeteners, which are just as unhealthy and not a viable alternative."

Ascencao says a sugar tax is not a panacea to the country's poor state of health, "but it's an educative tax. It sends a message which makes us all aware and a little more responsible for our health."

For more information on healthy food choices, go to [OTC Pharma](#) or for a recommended eco-diet, go to www.ecodiet.co.za.

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