

**Embargoed until 00.01 – Thursday 17 December 2020**

## **Call for Compulsory Salt Reduction Targets as Warburtons Remains the UK's Saltiest Crumpet with NO Reduction in Salt Over Four Years**

- **'The UK's Number 1 Crumpet', Warburtons is STILL the saltiest with NO reductions over four years – despite being part of a national salt reduction programme!**
- **What's more, Warburton's GIANT crumpet contains as much salt as 3x portions of McDonald's Small Fries<sup>1</sup>**
- **A 20% salt reduction in Warburton's Crumpet would remove a whopping 109 tonnes of salt from the UK diet per year – equivalent to the weight of 9 double decker buses<sup>2</sup>**
- **UK Government MUST mandate the NEW salt reduction targets as a key public health strategy to lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of strokes and heart disease, say Action on Salt.**

A NEW survey led by researchers at Action on Salt (based at Queen Mary University of London) has revealed the unnecessary levels of salt found in some of the UK's best-selling crumpets – with no change in over four years!

Despite being called out for their high salt levels in 2016<sup>3</sup>, **Warburtons (*the UK's Number 1 Crumpet*)** continues to fail in reducing the salt content across its entire range of crumpets in what appears to be a complete disregard for the importance of salt reduction on our health. Reducing salt intake across the UK population, says the expert group, will help reduce the risk of strokes and heart disease.

A 20% reduction in salt by this leading British baking firm would bring them in line with the UK salt reduction targets<sup>5</sup> and would **remove a whopping 109 tonnes of salt from the UK diet per year** – equivalent to the weight of 9 double decker buses<sup>2</sup>!

In fact, just one **Warburtons standard sized crumpet** provides the same amount of salt (0.81g) as two portions of McDonald's Small Fries<sup>1</sup>, and their giant crumpet contains as much salt (1.48g) as three portions of McDonald's Small Fries.

Their **gluten-free crumpets** have INCREASED in salt by more than a third (36%) – making them the only company to not even meet the previous 2017 salt reduction maximum targets set by Public Health England<sup>6</sup>. **Morrisons Crumpets** have also increased in salt since 2016 by 26%; no significant reductions have been made by any other company.

When it comes to variations in salt content, **Warburtons Crumpets** contain a staggering 58% more salt at 1.48g/100g than the least salty crumpet surveyed, **Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Luxury Multiseed Sourdough Crumpets** (0.94g/100). Both are exactly the same size at 55g per crumpet.

### Crumpets with the highest salt content

	Salt/100g (g)	Salt/Crumpet (g)	Crumpet size (g)
Warburtons Giant Crumpets	1.48	1.55	105
Warburtons Crumpets	1.48	0.81	55
Warburtons Gluten Free Crumpets	1.43	1.04	73
Kingsmill Crumpets	1.25	0.68	54
M&S Ultimate Crumpets	1.23	0.68	55

### Crumpets with the lowest salt content

	Salt/100g (g)	Salt/Crumpet (g)	Crumpet size (g)
Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Luxury Multiseed Sourdough Crumpets	0.94	0.52	55
Asda Teddy Crumpets	1	0.45	45
Co-op Irresistible Buttermilk Enriched Sourdough Crumpets	1	0.54	54
Tesco Crumpets	1	0.6	55
Aldi Village Bakery Giant Crumpets Big & Fluffy	1	1	100

Despite most of the products stating 'one crumpet' as a serving size on pack, Action on Salt's online polling data suggests the majority of people consume two or more crumpets at any one time<sup>7</sup>.

Eating just two **Warburtons Gluten Free Crumpets** (the highest salt per standard sized crumpet) would provide over a third of an adult's maximum daily recommended allowance (6g salt) – and that's before considering the toppings. Comparing to another breakfast favourite, two crumpets provide the same salt content as five and a half slices of white bread<sup>8</sup>.

Total salt in crumpets can come from both added salt (sodium chloride) and raising agents (baking powder). As well as reducing the amount of added salt, low salt raising agents such as potassium bicarbonate can be used and are accepted by Public Health England as a suitable and safe alternative to salt<sup>9</sup>. Over a third of crumpets surveyed have potassium labelled in their ingredients list. This, along with the variation in salt content seen across crumpets, clearly demonstrates that reductions in this category are technically possible.

With the planned dissolution of Public Health England (PHE) during 2021, rather worryingly no clear strategy has been confirmed by the Government with regards to who will take responsibility for driving the UK's salt reduction programme and saving lives.

#### **Sonia Pombo, Nutritionist and Campaign Manager at Action on Salt says:**

"Our findings show a clear divide between the food companies that are actively trying to improve the nation's health and those that aren't. Three years on from the 2017 salt reduction targets, some companies are still failing to make meaningful reductions in salt, despite it clearly being achievable. With new targets now set for 2024, it's time they stopped dithering and started levelling up with the more responsible companies."

#### **Zoe Davies, Nutritionist at Action on Salt adds:**

"Crumpets are a popular comfort food for both adults and children as increased sales indicate. But with added toppings they can quickly accumulate to half of our recommended maximum salt intake for the day (6g). To make crumpets a healthier choice, consider adding no added salt peanut butter or eating with scrambled egg to make one crumpet more substantial. This keeps you fuller for longer whilst keeping the salt content down.

Alternatively, try topping with some fruit, such as sliced banana, which will help count towards the five a day many of us aren't achieving."

**Professor Graham MacGregor, Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine at Queen Mary University of London and Chairman of Action on Salt** says: "Reducing salt is the most cost-effective measure to lower blood pressure and reduce the number of people suffering from strokes and heart disease. Like with the recent and disappointing voluntary sugar reduction progress report issued by PHE, it's a scandal that certain manufacturers have still not made any progress in reducing the salt in their products. The Government must now mandate these targets to ensure a fair and level playing field."

### Top tips for choosing healthier crumpets

- Be mindful of portions sizes, and how quickly salt levels add up
- Use the FoodSwitch UK App<sup>10</sup> to help identify healthier alternatives so that you can swap to a lower salt choice
- Be minimal with toppings and try and choose those that are less salty and sugary such as:
  - Unsalted butter or margarine
  - Scrambled Eggs (added protein will keep you fuller for longer)
  - Peanut butter (no added salt/sugar/oil) with sliced banana
  - Low fat cream cheese with an apple on the side
  - Sliced banana with a sprinkle of cinnamon

**ENDS**

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### Notes to editors:

#### About Action on Salt

Action on Salt is a group concerned with salt and its effects on health, supported by 22 expert scientific members. Action on Salt is successfully working to reach a consensus with the food industry and Government over the harmful effects of a high salt diet, and bring about a reduction in the amount of salt in processed foods as well as salt added to cooking, and at the table.

Up to 2011, the UK salt reduction programme, under the Food Standards Agency (FSA), led the world and had already saved 18,000 strokes and heart attacks per year – with £1.5 billion a year in NHS healthcare saving costs, according to NICE.

In 2016, Public Health England assumed responsibility for UK salt reduction, and on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020 published a new set of voluntary salt targets. However, setting targets without enforcement has been shown to have little effect, as demonstrated by the failed Responsibility Deal and the lack of progress made by the food industry on the previous set of targets. What is required is a clear and transparent monitoring programme, to include annual progress reports and strong engagement with the whole sector, along with case studies of successful reformulation to aid industry-wide reformulation

#### References

1. A portion of McDonalds fries (small) contains 0.44g salt <https://www.mcdonalds.com/gb/en-gb/product/small-fries.html>
2. Warburton's report selling 700 million crumpets a year <https://www.warburtons.co.uk/news/article/crumpet-recipe-revealed>. If they reduced the salt content of their standard crumpet in line with the salt targets, that would be the equivalent of 108.85 tonnes of salt removed from the nation's diet, the equivalent of 8.8 double decker buses  
NB. The London Routemaster double decker bus weighs 12.4 tons. <https://www.london.gov.uk/questions/2014/3600>
3. Action on Salt 2016 crumpets survey <http://www.actiononsalt.org.uk/news/surveys/2016/crumpets/>
4. Warburton's declare themselves as the number 1 crumpet on their packaging, based on total Coverage, Value Sales, 52 w/e 26.01.19. The Nielsen Company
5. Crumpets fall under the broader bread category of morning goods, powder raised, with a maximum salt target of 1.19g/100g. Salt reduction: targets for 2024 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/salt-reduction-targets-for-2024>
6. Salt reduction: targets for 2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/salt-reduction-targets-for-2017>
7. Action on Salt twitter poll 6.10.2020. 70 votes. Question: How many crumpets do you usually eat at one time? Results: 1 (14.3%), 2 (64.3%), 3 (17.1%), 4+ (4.3%) <https://twitter.com/actiononsalt?s=20>
8. One slice of Hovis soft white medium bread contains 0.36g/slice <https://www.tesco.com/groceries/en-GB/products/256174499>
9. SACN-COT statements on potassium-based sodium replacers <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-cot-statements-on-potassium-based-sodium-replacers>
10. FoodSwitch UK app <http://www.foodswitch.co.uk>