



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on December 28, 2020

British Government Announces Ban on Certain Promotions of “Unhealthy” Foods

The U.K. government on Monday announced that it would be imposing severe restrictions on retailers’ promotions of foods the state deems “unhealthy,” including prohibiting certain discounts and displays of such items.

The restrictions, which will not take effect until April 2022, are allegedly aimed at combating obesity, particularly among children. According to a [press release](#) from the Department of Health and Social Care, the new “policy focuses on the products that are significant contributors to sugar and calorie intakes in children and that are heavily promoted.”



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“Promotions often appear to help shoppers save money,” reads the release. “However, data shows that these deals actually increase purchases of promoted products by almost 20%. They encourage people to buy more than they need or intended to buy in the first place.”

Since individuals cannot be trusted to make their own purchasing decisions, the government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson — a former opponent of the nanny state who has since made the U.K. a nightmare of lockdowns and mask mandates, even going so far as to [“cancel” Christmas](#), in the name of saving lives — has taken it upon itself to make those decisions for them.

Under the new policy, retailers will be prohibited from offering discounts for purchasing multiples of the same item if that item is considered to be too high in fat, salt, or sugar. In other words, sales such as “buy one, get one free” or “three for the price of two” will be banned.

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Stores will also be forbidden to position the offending foods in certain places that are more likely to attract customers’ attention, specifically “at store entrances, aisle ends and checkouts and their online equivalents (homepages, landing pages for other food categories, and shopping basket or payment pages).” These restrictions, however, only apply to stores larger than 2,000 feet; specialty stores such as chocolate shops are exempt. Thus, a supermarket that sells a variety of foods may not tempt customers with junk food, but small stores that sell nothing but candy or pastries are free to display their wares in every nook of their establishments.

Also, restaurants, if they are ever allowed to reopen for in-person dining, will not be permitted to offer “free refills of sugary soft drinks.”

As usual, trying to make sense of government regulations is futile. As the [Evening Standard](#) observed, “the plans follow the Government’s ‘help out to eat out’ scheme, which saw diners given 50 per cent off food and non-alcoholic drinks in order to boost the hospitality sector.”

“We know families want to be presented with healthier choices. This is why we are restricting



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promotions and introducing a range of measures to make sure the healthy choice is the easy choice,” Public Health Minister Jo Churchill said in the press release.

The usual nanny-state proponents, of course, praised the new policy.

“Finally, Downing Street is acting decisively with a bold first step to restrict the sale of junk food on multi-buy offers and at checkouts, and taking on one of the biggest threats to Britain’s future health — childhood obesity,” said Graham MacGregor, chairman of lobbying groups Action on Sugar and Action on Salt.

Likewise, Obesity Health Alliance lead Caroline Cerny said, “Taking the spotlight off junk food means the only buy one get one free offers we see will be on healthier foods. Retailers won’t be able to tempt us to impulsively buy tins of sweets in supermarket entrances or chocolate bars in clothes shops.”

According to the press release, “Obesity is one of the biggest health crises the country faces. Almost two thirds (63%) of adults in England are overweight or living with obesity and 1 in 3 children leave primary school overweight or obese.”

That makes it sound like the policy is being implemented out of genuine concern for Her Majesty’s subjects. Then comes this sentence: “Obesity-related illnesses cost the [National Health Service] £6 billion [about \$8 billion] a year.”

The real concern, therefore, is with how much obesity is costing the U.K.’s socialist healthcare system — a system that, because it appears to offer free treatment, actually encourages people not to take care of themselves. As always, the welfare state is a prelude to the total state.



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