

Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) No thank you!

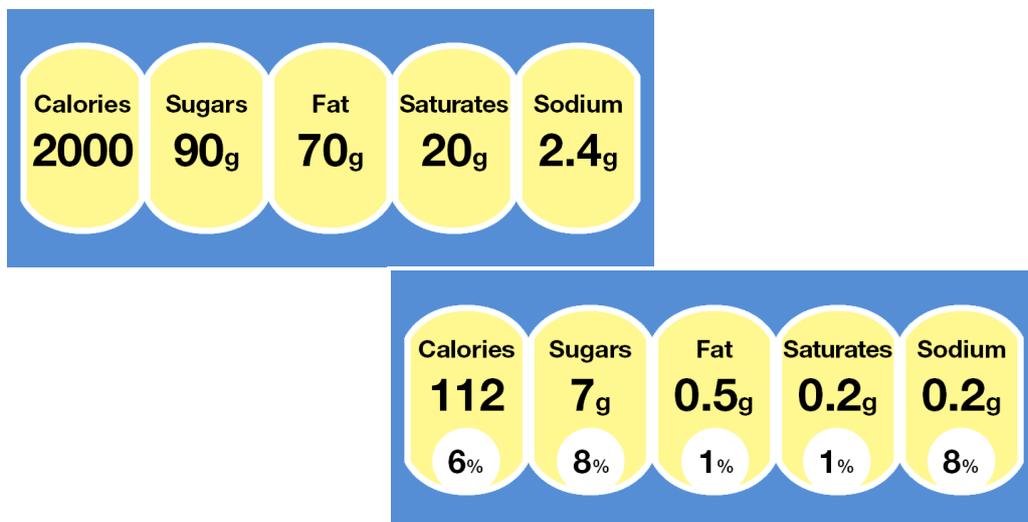
GDA means Guideline Daily Amount and shows the amount of calories, sugar, fats and salt etc. in a portion of a food product and the percentage of the guideline daily amount of these nutrients.

GDA represents the dream of a simple food labelling scheme that enables consumers to understand the impact of individual foods to their daily diet.

GDA is now part of the EU proposal for a regulation on food information. The overall objective of the EU proposal is to provide clear, consistent and evidence-based information.

But GDA misleads consumers and does not support consumers in making health-conscious choices.

GDA has serious inherent errors that cannot be repaired. We therefore strongly recommend the complete removal of GDA from the proposal, both as mandatory and voluntary information.

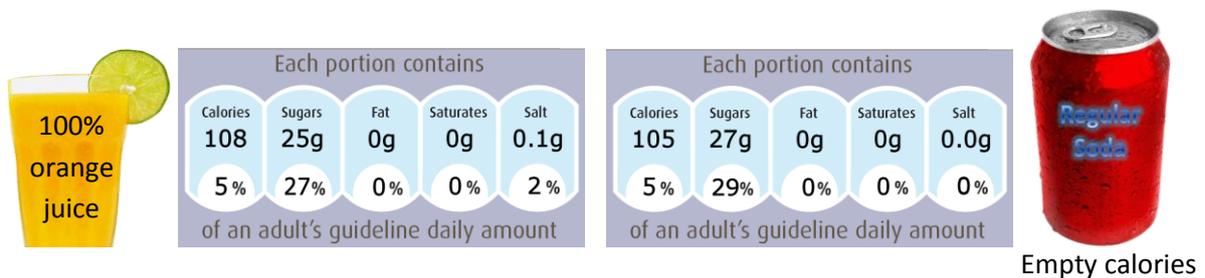


Not supporting healthy eating

Here are GDA-labels for two products. The one on the right looks healthier, with no calories and sugar. But it is not!



Here is another example. They look very much the same. But they are not!



GDA is focused on fats, sugar and salt. Natural and healthy foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, milk, fish and meats contain much more than that. Think of:

- | | | | |
|------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Vitamin A | Vitamin B7 | Folate | Iron |
| Vitamin B1 | Vitamin B12 | Essential amino acids | Magnesium |
| Vitamin B2 | Vitamin C | Essential fatty acids | Potassium |
| Vitamin B3 | Vitamin D | Phytochemicals | Selenium |
| Vitamin B5 | Vitamin E | Calcium | Zinc |
| Vitamin B6 | Vitamin K | | |

GDA does not give natural foods any credit for these vital nutrients.



The food industry argues that consumers already know to choose milk instead of soda, but consistent nutrition labelling must

- differentiate between healthier and unhealthier foods, and
- support official nutrition recommendations.

The incredible shrinking portion



This is 175 grams of potato chips. The GDA says it is 11% of a person's daily maximum of fat.



That is not so bad!

But in fact the package contains 53 grams of fat which is 75% of the daily maximum, not 11%.



What happened?

The food industry agreed – all on their own – to label the chips based on very small portions of 25 grams only. This makes the chips look less fattening.

This portion trick is also used on sweets, soft drinks, biscuits and other unhealthy products. But honestly, these products do not get any healthier!

This is 25 grams.
How much do you eat?



Portions doomed to failure

Portion size is a major problem. GDA is based on portions. The smaller the portion, the healthier a product looks. The food industry has decided on very small portions.

Therefore it has been suggested that the EU establish universal portions. But it is impossible to define universal portions that are not misleading when it comes to real products and real people because of big variations.

- No portion fits all. People need and eat different amounts depending on age, gender, activity, hunger and liking.
- Nobody can or should establish recommended portions for foods that consumers should limit.
- Should a portion be the recommended, the realistic, or the average amount?



Trying to repair GDA this way is only in the interest of food industry. Not in the interest of the consumers.

PS: If the food industry really wants to fight obesity, they should instead produce and sell smaller packages.

Visit stopGDA.eu to join the campaign and to get more information

Guaranteed! Obesity for our kids!



GDA is always based on the 2000 calories needed by a 40 year old – moderately active – woman. Also on foods specifically intended for children even though children need much less energy – contrary to what many people think.

This Danonino claims to have 5 % of a day's calories,



but the true value is 10% for Ann who is 2 years old. So the label is off – by **100%**!

Such information is misleading and might contribute to the fast growing epidemic of obesity in children in Europe.

Magic of small numbers

Here are 14 mostly fatty, sugary or salty products.



Each one of these 14 products supplies less than 10% of a day's calories. Why is that?

It is partly due to smaller-than-realistic portions. But even using real-life portion sizes, any one food would tend to look insignificant. That's because the average person eats 20 or more different foods in a day. So, on average, each individual food will contribute only around 5% of a day's energy – which sounds harmlessly low.

Dividing small numbers by 2.000 will always result in small percentages, making fatty and sugary products look harmless. One small number after another, throughout the day, leaves consumers feeling healthy. But altogether, these many small numbers add up to big health problems.



$$\frac{110 \text{ kcal} \times 100\%}{2.000 \text{ kcal}} = 6\%$$



$$\frac{75 \text{ kcal} \times 100\%}{2.000 \text{ kcal}} = 4\%$$

GDA may increase - *not* fight - obesity.

Sugar reference

Natural sugar occurs in many healthy foods, especially milk and fruits – and it's always accompanied by other vital nutrients.

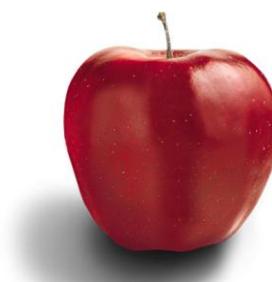
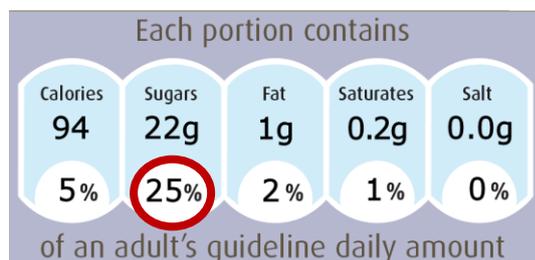
But contrary to WHO* the food industry disregards the difference between added sugar (empty calories) and natural sugar. This makes the amount of added sugar appear lower. We call it the sugar reference trick.

The GDA on these Kellogg's Frosties says 13% - based on added + natural sugar.



The correct figure is **24%** when based on added sugar only.

The sugar reference trick also makes Frosties look healthier than an apple.



Removing natural sugar from the reference is not an option either. Objective information should not hide natural sugar.

The food industry argues that a calorie is a calorie no matter where it comes from. Technically they are right, but not when fighting obesity. Then it's important to limit empty calories.

There is no solution to the sugar reference problem

* WHO and Nordic Nutrition Recommendations set a daily limit for added sugar at 50 g. The industry sets a daily limit for total sugar at 90 g (=added + natural sugar).

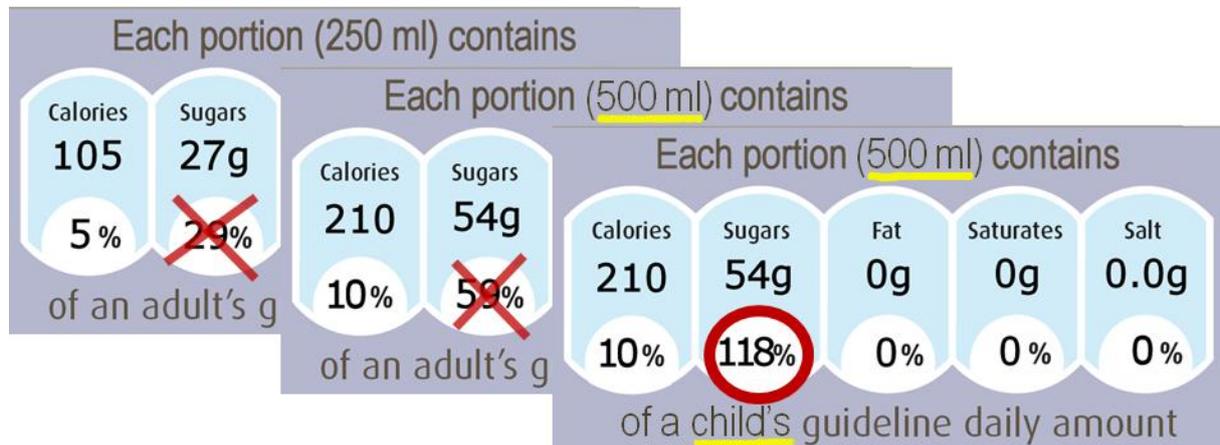
It all adds up



This is Juan. He is 9 years old. His soda says 27g of sugar = 29% of the daily sugar limit.

But he doesn't stop at 250ml. He drinks the whole bottle just like most kids do. So sugar doubles.

When you consider the sugar reference trick and Juan's lower sugar limit due to his age, the correct sugar for Juan is actually 118%.



Such food information will not support consumers in making health-conscious choices.

The founding fathers

Do you know who created GDA?



The GDA system was created and spread across Europe by some of the biggest international food companies, including big producers of sweets, chips and soft drinks.

But nutrition labelling is too important to be left to the them.

The GDA system has already been used in the US for years without effect. Why repeat the failure of the American system in Europe?

The food industry says GDA is already here, and it's here to stay. Let us show them that they are wrong. Let us join together and fight the GDA.

Guideline Daily Amount is misleading consumers because of many insoluble system errors.

GDA cannot replace mandatory 100 g/ml food labelling, and should not be legitimized by EU – not even as voluntary food information.

We therefore strongly recommend the complete removal of GDA from the proposal for EU regulation on food information to consumers.

Sincerely,



DANISH AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL



Danish Cancer Society



Version 9/19th February 2009

Visit stopGDA.eu to join the campaign and to get more information