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## Many 'healthy' baby food brands contain too much sugar

Parents are urged to check the labels of foods aimed at babies and young children amid concerns about unhealthy amounts of sugar.

Public Health England (PHE) has published a [report](#) finding that many fruit pouches for infants contain unhealthy amounts of sugar, despite the use of health-conscious terms such as 'organic' and 'not made from concentrate' being used on the product packaging.

Juice product packages from some well-known baby food brands contain over 9 g of sugar per serving, despite the NHS guidelines stating that children aged 36 months to six years should have no more than 19 g of free sugars per day.

Out of 1,120 [baby food](#) and drink products reviewed for the report, more than one in four (28.1%) are targeted at four-month-olds despite advice from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) that introducing solid foods should not happen until around six months of age.

[Dr Alison Tedstone](#) chief nutritionist at PHE, warned that the baby and toddler food industry must be careful not to break the trust of parents. "The food industry could do more to support parents in making the best food choices for their children. Snacking and sweet foods are being promoted while parents are being encouraged to introduce solids earlier than recommended."

This report comes after the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) [warned](#) that pouches and jars of baby food often contain excessive amounts of sugar contributing to tooth decay, poor diet and obesity.

In England, nearly a quarter of children aged four to five years are overweight or obese. While a similar proportion have experienced tooth decay by their fifth birthday.

The RCPCH encouraged parents to feed their infants more bitter-tasting foods such as broccoli and spinach, in order to help them avoid developing a sweet tooth.

Professor Mary Fewtrell, assistant officer for health improvement and nutrition lead for RCPCH, said: "It's important to recognise that babies have an innate preference for sweet tastes but the key is not to reinforce that preference and to expose them to a variety of different flavours and food textures. Babies are very willing to try different flavours if they're given the chance - and it's important that they're introduced to a variety of flavours, including more bitter tasting foods such as broccoli and spinach, from a young age."

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<b>Peer reviewed by:</b> Natalie Healey 28/06/2019	

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