

8 May 2013

Mr Thomas Pietkiewicz  
fyi-request-826-2f6dadcf@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Pietkiewicz

**Official Information Act Request H201301327**

Thank you for your email of 11 April 2013 requesting information about Government action in relation to fructose and diabetes.

You asked for information relating to:

- the Government's action plan to deal with fructose and diabetes, including prevention of diabetes and fructose intake
- discussions in Parliament in the last two years about fructose and diabetes
- deaths in New Zealand caused by type two diabetes and obesity
- the status of obesity in New Zealand.

Please find information relating to these requests attached.

Your request for information about discussions in Parliament in the last two years has been refused under section 18(d) of the Official Information Act, as the information is already publicly available.

You have the right under section 28(3) to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my response to your request.

Yours sincerely



Cathy O'Malley  
**Deputy Director-General**  
**Sector Capability and Implementation**



**1. Can you please detail the Government's action plan to deal with 'fructose' and 'diabetes'?**

Diabetes is managed by clinical teams within district health boards and primary care, and there are a range of measures in place to respond to diabetes. DHB Diabetes Care Improvement Packages tailor the general practice visit to the needs of the patient. More information can be found on the Ministry's website: <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/diabetes/diabetes-care-improvement-package>.

The Ministry has produced Food and Nutrition Guidelines and background papers for health professionals in New Zealand who deal with nutrition. For example, the *Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Healthy Children and Young People (Aged 2-18 years)*: A background document is available on the Ministry's website ([www.health.govt.nz/publications](http://www.health.govt.nz/publications)). These guidelines advocate eating well, including recommending being physically active and maintaining a healthy body weight. These factors all contribute to prevention of type two diabetes. The Ministry has also written a number of accompanying publications for parents and caregivers to encourage healthy eating and physical activity for children of all ages. These publications are available on the Ministry's health education website ([www.healthed.govt.nz](http://www.healthed.govt.nz)).

Information about fructose intake among adults in New Zealand is available on the Ministry's website: <http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/focus-nutrition-key-findings-2008-09-nz-adult-nutrition-survey> - includes fructose intakes in Table 3.21 and key food sources of fructose Table 3.22.

**2. What is the Government doing to prevent diabetes? [is there a working plan document or task force?]**

A Government health target for 2012/13 is 'More heart and diabetes checks.' This promotes the early detection of diabetes in individuals, or identification of individuals at high risk of developing type two diabetes. More information about the health target can be found on the Ministry's website: <http://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/health-targets/2012-13-health-targets?mega=NZ%20health%20system&title=2012/13%20Health%20Targets>.

In addition to guidance in relation to being physically active and maintaining a healthy body weight (as stated above), there are further Government initiatives in place to encourage healthy lifestyle choices and prevent diseases such as type two diabetes. The Health Promotion Agency promotes healthy eating through the Feeding our Families programme. The Ministry also funds the Heart Foundation to work with the food industry to reduce the fat, salt and sugar content of food and drink that is commonly consumed by New Zealanders.

Government-funded projects are in place in schools to encourage healthy eating amongst young people. For example, through the Fruit in Schools programme, the Ministry funds the supply of fruit to decile one and two schools. The Ministry also funds the Fuelled 4 Life Programme, which is managed by the Heart Foundation and involves the education, health, and food industry sectors working together to make it easier to have healthier food in schools and in early childhood education services.

Green Prescriptions are a written prescription from a general practitioner or practice nurse advising and supporting an individual on ways that they can become more active. They are issued where there is concern about lifestyle choices regarding diet and exercise. Within Green Prescriptions there is also a separate youth focussed programme; the Green Prescription Active Families programme is designed to increase physical activity in young people aged five to 18 years of age. There were 890 children from 767 families enrolled in this programme in 2011.

The National Diabetes Service Improvement Group (NDSIG) works to develop and support initiatives around diabetes in New Zealand, and is an advisory group to the Ministry. Within the NDSIG there is a subgroup focussed on prevention and pre diabetes.

**3. What is the Government doing to prevent fructose intake? [is there a working plan document or task force?]**

Fructose naturally occurs in fruit, some vegetables and honey. Ministry of Health food and nutrition guidelines recommend consuming a variety of foods, including food from each of four food groups (vegetables and fruit; breads and cereals; milks and milk products; lean meat, poultry, seafood, eggs or alternatives).

**4. Has there been any discussion in relation to diabetes and fructose in New Zealand parliament within the last two years?**

This request is being refused under section 18(d) of the Official Information Act, as the information is publicly available. Hansard records can be found online: <http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/PB/Debates/Debates/>.

**5. How many New Zealand citizens have died of type 2 diabetes in the last ten years?**

People with type two diabetes do not die of diabetes. Complications arising from having type two diabetes, for example kidney failure or heart disease, cause death. Information on the number of people who die from diseases like these who also have type two diabetes is not compiled in New Zealand.

Information relating to mortality in New Zealand is available on the Ministry's website: <http://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/health-statistics-and-data-sets/mortality-data-and-stats>.

**6. How many New Zealand citizens have died of obesity in the last ten years compared to cigarettes and motor vehicle accidents?**

People do not die from obesity but from complications arising from obesity, such as kidney failure or heart disease. The number of people who die from diseases like these who are also obese is not routinely recorded in New Zealand.

## **7. Is New Zealand in an obesity epidemic?**

The prevalence of obesity in developed countries has increased rapidly in the last 20 years. This dramatic rise of the condition is sometimes described as an epidemic. General information and statistics relating to obesity in New Zealand can be found on the Ministry of Health website: <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/obesity>.

Further information can be found on the Ministry's website. The following links may be of use to you: <http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/health-new-zealand-adults-2011-12>; <http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/health-new-zealand-children-2011-12>; <http://www.health.govt.nz/news-media/media-releases/guidelines-help-address-increased-obesity-prevalence-nz>.

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