

Things go smaller with Coca-Cola

The "buddy" Coke size has been reduced to 440ml and there will be no more 500ml bottles on the shelves after next month, as Coca-Cola attempts to cut its customers' sugar consumption.



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The traditional 330ml Coke cans will soon contain just 300ml. Some consumers are angry at being asked to pay the same for less Coke, but Coca-Cola said in a media release it was making controlling sugar easier.

A reporter bought a new, 440ml bottle at a garage store for R11.50, the same price as the 500ml bottle was sold for at the same shop last week. Coke says the price of the new sizes will remain the same as the old drinks.

"In an effort to keep a balance between pricing and input costs, the price of the smaller packs will remain the same."

The proposed sugar tax, which has put growing pressure on manufacturers of sugary drinks, may have played a role in forcing manufacturers to reduce how much sugar is in their products.

The Beverage Association of South Africa (BevSA), which represents the sweetened drink industry, said earlier this year a sugar tax was not a good idea, but proposed that the industry players should instead change their products.

In April, BevSA executive director Mapule Ncanywa said: "The industry had already committed to reducing calories

consumed from sugar-sweetened beverages by 15%, through reformulation, changes to pack sizes and offering low- and no-calorie options."



Coca-Cola SA caters to call for lower sugar intake

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Coca-Cola South Africa general manager Roger Gauntlett said in a statement that the new size was intended to reduce consumers' sugar intake.

"We're rethinking many of our drinks and package sizes around the world to reduce calories and sugar and reflect the changing tastes and dietary preferences of our consumers," he said.

A 440ml still contains about 11 teaspoons of sugar. Professor Karen Hofman, the director of Priceless SA at the Wits School of Public Health, is a vocal proponent of the sugar tax.

She said: "The question to ask is whether they will produce a huge label on the front of the Coke, for the sake of transparency, that says 'ONLY' 11 teaspoons of sugar."

Coca-Cola said its changes meant South Africans were consuming less sugar. "In South Africa over the last three years, the Coca-Cola system has reduced the average sugar content across the portfolio by 16%," it said.

"Through their continuing reduction efforts they aim to reach a total of 22% to 24% by the end of 2018. This is ahead of industry commitment of a 14 to 18 calories a person a day reduction by 2018."

Source: The Times

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