

FACT SHEET: 3rd ACFF Public Opinion Survey on Tooth Decay

About the survey

The 2015 pan-European survey on oral health is the third in a series created by the Pan-European Chapter of the *Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future* (ACFF). Building on the previous two surveys conducted in 2013 and 2014 to assess public understanding of tooth decay (which is also known as dental caries), the third survey was designed to further assess public understanding of sugar content in food and drinks, and what help and advice the public expect from dental professionals to help them tackle this.

The survey was conducted online among 7,510 European adults, age 18+; including 1,000 respondents each from Germany, Spain, France, Italy and the UK; 500 respondents from Switzerland, Poland, Romania and Sweden and 510 from Greece. The survey was developed by the Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future, fielded by Toluna in September 2015 and supported by Colgate-Palmolive Company.

Key findings from the survey

Snapshot of what the public think their daily sugar consumption is

- 60% of Europeans claim that they consume more than the recommended daily limit of dietary sugar intake
 - The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends to limit daily sugar consumption to 10% of total calorie intake, (equal to 50g of sugar per day), with an ideal sugar intake of less than 5% of the overall daily calorie consumption.¹

Public misconceptions on sugar content in food

- 62% of Europeans under estimate that a bar of chocolate can be 50% sugar
- 61% of Europeans under estimate that ketchup can be 22% sugar
- 50% of Europeans under estimate that fruit yoghurt can be 20% sugar

Public opinion regarding dental advice and support with sugar consumption

- 70% of Europeans would like to learn more about the sugar content in food and drinks
- 63% of Europeans would like to receive advice helping them to deal with sugars and tooth decay
- 59% of Europeans would like to work with a dental professional to improve their personal oral care
- 63% of Europeans would like their dental professional to use a score/scale/traffic light system to help them understand if tooth decay is actively happening in their mouth

Key findings from the previous Public Opinion Survey on Tooth Decay (2013/2014):

- Over half of European adults (51%) admit they are embarrassed about their teeth, which prevents them from smiling and laughing.
- 67% of the respondents report that they have suffered from toothache or severe discomfort as a result of tooth decay.

- Across Europe, the majority of people (72%) don't think they do enough to prevent tooth decay and one in five (18%) admit they have a poor understanding of how to prevent tooth decay.
- One in three (36%) of people wrongly believe that sooner or later everyone will develop cavities, with nearly a quarter (24%) believe nothing can be done to reverse the early stage of tooth decay.

References:

1. World Health Organisation: Sugars intake for adults and children guidelines document. Available at: http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/guidelines/sugars_intake/en/ [Last accessed September 2015].

About the *Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future*

The *Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future*, a non-profitable charitable organisation, is a group of worldwide leading dental experts who have joined forces to help implement changes to dental health practices across the globe. The aim of the Alliance is to promote initiatives to stop the development and progression of dental caries in order to move towards a Cavity-Free Future for everyone. To achieve this goal, the Alliance believes that collaborative action is required to raise awareness of dental caries and positively influence people's dental health habits.

The *Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future* was built in collaboration with a worldwide panel of dental experts. The Alliance's goal is to drive global collaborative action through partnerships with a range of stakeholders from dental health professionals to local public policy and education communities, to the general public. It is supported by Colgate-Palmolive Company, which supports improved oral health through its partnerships with the dental profession and government and public health agencies.

Goals of the ACFF Pan-European Chapter

Overall goal and mission

- *Every child born across Europe in 2026 and thereafter should stay cavity-free during their lifetime*

Goal 1

Ensure that appropriate caries prevention and management can be implemented across Europe.

This can be achieved by:

- Engaging with a broad range of education bodies and health disciplines across Europe to adopt the approach and mindset of 'caries as a continuum'
- Facilitating the rollout of the European Core Curriculum in Cariology in dental schools across Europe to ensure a comprehensive education for the importance of caries prevention and management is delivered to the next generation of dental teams as well as to continuing education
- Supporting a uniform and harmonised core teaching on caries in paediatric dentistry

- Supporting the promotion and implementation of a caries classification management system for dental professionals, such as ICCMS™
- Facilitating discussions to ensure that remuneration systems support caries prevention and control without perverse incentives

Goal 2

Work collaboratively to achieve a reduction in caries inequality within and across European States in the context of both oral and general health

This can be achieved by:

- Facilitating the creation and regular update of an epidemiological map of the caries prevalence and distribution landscape in Europe
- Identifying and using the most suitable metrics to assess and monitor reduction in caries inequality and associated risk factors, without health detriment
- Understanding the broader social determinants of health and oral health
- Challenging key policy makers to facilitate health promotion interventions in caries prevention and management and support regional implementation across Europe

For more information visit: www.acffeurope.com or <https://www.youtube.com/user/ACFFEurope>