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New research reveals massive differences in the salt (sodium) content of identical pizzas around the world

World Salt Awareness Week survey revealed excessively high salt (sodium) levels in many pizzas around the world, with some pizzas containing twice the salt content of the same pizzas in other countries.

- A portion (150g) of pizza from a well known pizza manufacturer in Costa Rica is twice as salty as sea-water, containing a shocking 3.5g sodium, DOUBLE the recommended maximum daily intake.
- A Hawaiian Pizza from Pizza Hut in New Zealand has twice the amount of sodium than the same pizza in Canada.
- Men, in particular are putting their health at risk by eating more salt than women – in the UK men are eating the equivalent of 365 pints of salt in a lifetime

30 March 2011. New research, carried out by World Action on Salt and Health (WASH) as part of World Salt Awareness Week (21st – 27th March), identified that in some countries, people are being fed over twice as much salt as people elsewhere in the world. WASH surveyed the salt and sodium [Ref 1] content of over 500 pizza products available around the world from well known international pizza outlets such as Pizza Hut, Dominoes, Eagle Boys and Papa John's, as well as those available in supermarkets and grocery stores [Ref 2].

There are HUGE differences in the sodium content of pizzas around the world with even the most basic type of topping – margherita – with one margherita pizza from El Arreo in Costa

Rica containing over twice the amount of sodium found in seawater [Ref 3]! El Arreo produces a margherita pizza which contains a shocking 2.33g/100g sodium, almost eight times higher than a UK supermarket equivalent, (Tesco's' Margherita pizza) which contained just 0.300g sodium/100g. Just a third of the El Arreo Margherita pizza (150g) contains 3.5g sodium, nearly DOUBLE the World Health Organisation's recommendation of 2g sodium for a whole day [Ref 4].

Even identical pizza products made by the same company were found to contain wide variations in sodium content. For example, a Hawaiian take away pizza from Pizza Hut in New Zealand contains 0.910g sodium per 100g, over twice as much sodium compared to the same pizza from Pizza Hut in Canada (0.431g sodium per 100g). The same can be said for pizzas from Dominoes, with a Hawaiian pizza bought from Dominoes in the USA containing 0.970g sodium per 100g, more than double the sodium compared to a Hawaiian pizza bought in the UK with 0.400g sodium per 100g.

[Please feel free to include own country example here instead of UK]. The results from the survey also show extreme variations in sodium/salt levels within countries. For example in the UK, in spite of leading the way on sodium reduction, Pizza Express, a well known pizza restaurant, still has unacceptably high levels of sodium (2.470g sodium per 100g) in their Diavalo pizza compared to a Tesco's supermarket own brand Mediterranean vegetable pizza containing over 10 times less this sodium value (0.200g sodium per 100g).

The fact that some pizza manufacturers are able to produce pizzas with low levels of sodium demonstrates that there are no technical reasons why other pizza manufacturers are still producing pizzas with significantly higher levels of sodium, especially in light of the number of worldwide strategies to reduce sodium [Ref 5].

[Please feel free to include figures from own country example here instead of UK]. This year's World Salt Awareness Week is focusing on 'Salt and Men's Health'. In the UK, over twice as many men as women die prematurely of heart disease, heart failure and stroke (34,431 vs. 16,664 adults under 75) [Ref 6]. The World Health Organisation's maximum daily recommendation is 2g of sodium, or 5g salt, however in the UK men currently eat about 10g

of salt a day, the equivalent of **365 pints of salt** in a life time, with young men eating even more [Ref 7].

“Eating too much sodium puts up our blood pressure, the major risk factor of cardiovascular disease (strokes, heart attacks and heart disease), the leading cause of death and disability worldwide, [Ref. 8] says Professor Graham MacGregor, Chairman of WASH and Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine at Barts & The London School of Medicine and Dentistry. “Because of this, many countries are taking action to gradually reduce sodium intake around the world, which would save millions of lives each year”.

“It is the responsibility of multinational food companies to reduce the amount of salt they add to our food across the globe” says Clare Farrand, Public Health Nutritionist and Project Coordinator at World Action on Salt and Health. “If Pizza Hut can provide the UK with lower salt pizza, why can’t the rest of the world have them too? It is hugely unfair for some countries to have healthier foods than others, yet food manufacturers still seem reluctant to provide their healthiest products to everybody in the world.”

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For more information, please visit our website www.worldactiononsalt.com or contact:

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Notes to Editors

Ref 1: 1g sodium = 2.5g salt

Ref 2: Survey details (Full data available with this release) and tables below:

- All data is sourced from manufacturers' corporate websites and products surveyed in store
- WASH members from 83 different countries around the world were invited to participate in the study. 10 countries in total participated. Country level data was collected according to availability online
- We have only included the products and equivalent products within countries for which we could locate information. We have compared sodium per 100g for pizza as portion size varies between countries
- Products are those stated or their equivalents, as stated in the 'notes' section. Products translated from native language to English

Ref 3: Atlantic seawater contains 1.0g of sodium per 100g, which equates to 2.5g of salt per 100g.

Ref 4: World Health Organisation Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Population Sodium Reduction Strategies [Accessed online 22.03.201]
http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241500777_eng.pdf

Ref 5: World Action on Salt and Health (WASH) was established in 2005 and is a global group with the mission to improve the health of populations throughout the world by achieving a gradual reduction in salt intake. WASH has 423 members from 82 countries
<http://www.worldactiononsalt.com/>

Ref 6: England and Wales, Office for National Statistics (2008). Deaths registered by cause, sex and age

Ref 7: All Men, 9.7g (Men 19-24 10.67g) vs. All women, 7.7g Ave daily salt intake (g/day).
<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/08sodiumreport.pdf>. Men's salt intake in adult life (59.7years) equiv in ml -207,140.49ml divided by 1 pint (568.26ml) = 364.52 pints.

Ref 8: Karppanen H, Mervaala E. Sodium intake and mortality. *Lancet*. 1998;351:1509.

Tables

1. Highest and lowest pizzas by country

Country	Company Name	Product Name	Portion size (g)	Sodium (g) per 100g	Sodium (g) per portion	Salt (g) per 100g	Salt (g) per portion
Australia	Pizza Hut	Thin 'n Crispy BBQ Meat Lovers	62	0.890	0.552	2.23	1.380
Australia	Domino's	Chicken, Tomato and Oregano Ciabatta Pizza	298	0.241	0.718	0.60	1.795
Australia	McCain	Garlic Pizza	160	0.176	0.282	0.44	0.704
Canada	Pizza Hut	Pepperoni Lovers Thin n Crispy	78	0.744	0.580	1.86	1.45
Canada	Pizza Hut	Veggie Lovers Pan	104	0.317	0.330	0.79	0.83
Costa Rica	El Arreo	Pizzitas	100	3.50	3.50	8.75	8.75
Costa Rica	Red Baron	Four Cheese Pizzas, Singles Pizza Deep Dish.	172	0.41	0.70	1.02	1.75
Finland	Grandiosa ¹	Pan Pizza XXL	240	0.640	1.54	1.60	3.84
Finland	Kotipizza	Pollo Mexicana	Not provided	0.384	Not provided	0.96	Not Provided
Japan	Domino's	Garlic Master	80.0	0.600	0.480	1.50	1.2
Japan	Domino's	Lasagna Pizza	80.6	0.447	0.360	1.12	0.9
Malaysia	Pizza Hut	Thai Seafood	81	0.457	0.37	1.14	0.925
Malaysia	Pizza Hut	Veggie Lover	84	0.226	0.19	0.57	0.475
New Zealand	Pizza Hut	Meat Lovers Thin N Crispy	55	1.140	0.62	2.85	1.55
New Zealand	Pizza Hut	Vege Delight Pan	77	0.350	0.27	0.88	0.68
South Africa	Pick n Pay brand	Barbeque Chicken Pizza	195	0.920	1.79	2.30	4.49
South Africa	Italia	Margherita Light Pizza	Not provided	0.434	Not provided	1.09	Not Provided
UK	Dr Oetker	Casa Di Mama Diavola Pizza	195	0.730	1.42	6.20	Not Provided
UK	Dr Oetker	Casa Di Mama Diavola Pizza	195	0.730	1.43	1.83	3.56
UK	Tescos	Thin and Crispy Mediterranean Vegetable	216	0.200	0.5	0.60	1.3
USA	Pizza Hut	Meat Lover's Thin N Crispy	117	1.034	1.21	2.59	3.025

2. Highest and lowest examples at Domino's around the world by topping

Topping Type	Country	Product Name	Sodium (g) per 100g	Sodium (g) per portion	Salt (g) per 100g	Salt (g) per portion
Hawaiian	USA	Honolulu Hawaiian Deep Dish	0.970	0.97	2.43	2.43
	UK	Ham & Pineapple	0.400	0.26	1.00	0.6
Margherita	Australia	Puff Simply Cheese	0.574	0.339	1.44	0.847
	UK	Cheese & Tomato	0.344	0.17	0.86	0.4
Multi meat	New Zealand	Meat Lovers Thin N Crispy	0.820	0.58	2.05	1.45
	USA	MeatZZa Feast Deep Dish	0.440	1.15	1.10	2.88
Pepperoni	Australia	Gluten Free Toni Pepperoni	0.760	0.274	1.90	0.684
	UK	Pepperoni Passion	0.504	0.36	1.26	0.9
Vegetarian	Australia	Puff Vegorama	0.468	0.323	1.17	0.807
	UK	Vegetarian Supreme	0.268	0.18	0.67	0.5

3. Highest and lowest examples at Pizza Hut around the world by topping

Topping Type	Country	Product Name	Sodium (g) per 100g	Sodium (g) per portion	Salt (g) per 100g	Salt (g) per portion
Hawaiian	New Zealand	Hawaiian Thin N Crispy	0.910	0.53	2.28	1.33
	Canada	Hawaiian Pan	0.431	0.440	1.08	1.10
Margherita	USA	Cheese Only Thin N Crispy	0.841	0.74	2.10	1.85
	New Zealand	Margherita Pan	0.360	0.292	0.90	0.73
Multi meat	New Zealand	Meat Lovers Thin N Crispy	1.140	0.62	2.85	1.55
	Malaysia	Super Supreme	0.408	0.31	1.02	0.78
Pepperoni	USA	Pepperoni Thin N Crispy	0.977	0.85	2.44	2.125
	Malaysia	Pepperoni delight	0.276	0.24	0.69	0.6
Vegetarian	USA	Veggie Lover's Thin N Crispy	0.607	0.71	1.52	1.775
	Malaysia	Veggie Lover	0.226	0.19	0.57	0.475

