

Pick n Pay removes over 3 500 tonnes of salt and sugar from private label foods over five years

Pick n Pay has taken significant steps to improve the health of South Africans by removing over 3 500 tonnes of salt and sugar from its private label range over the last five years.

Consumers the world over – and South Africans are no exception – are increasingly eating more processed foods, resulting in diets that are low in nutritional quality but high in energy, sugars, salt and fats.

According to the World Health Organization, reducing sugar, salt and fat intake is critical to preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which are on the rise globally. In South Africa, NCD Countdown 2030 reports that 51.9% of deaths are caused by NCDs, with diabetes, heart disease and stroke being the most common culprits.

In 2017, Pick n Pay set about improving the nutrition credentials of their private label range with a focus on reducing sodium and sugar content. This redevelopment has resulted in over 1 000 tonnes of salt and 2 500 tonnes of sugar being removed from the product range since then. Sugar content has been reduced by over a third in various products, including carbonated beverages, cordials, flavoured waters, cereal bars, instant oats, kids breakfast cereals, bakery products and flavoured yoghurt.



“We want to equip our customers with products and product information to take better control of their health,” says Juliet Fearnhead, Pick n Pay dietitian. “Through this substantial reduction in salt and sugar, we’re proud to have made such a significant impact on the health of our customers by promoting healthier food and choices.”

“So many of our customers are looking for simple and inexpensive health solutions. There is a perception that healthy eating is inaccessible for many. That’s why we’re going the extra mile to make healthy choices more affordable and accessible for all South Africans. Whether it’s through our free health hotline – where customers can get personalised nutritional

guidance – or our on-pack nutrition and Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) labelling, we’re committed to supporting our customers in their healthy aspirations,” says Fearnhead.

Pick n Pay launched its Live Well brand in 2019. It has quickly diversified to meet the growing demand for healthier food. It now caters to various dietary needs such as plant-based, gluten-free, low carb and organic. There are now over 450 Live Well products.

To further promote healthy eating, Pick n Pay has also enriched over 40 lines of its own brand cereals and porridges to help boost the intake of key vitamins and minerals. Additionally, it introduced a range of healthier food options designed specifically for children, with a focus on minimising salt and sugar content and using only natural colourants. The retailer also distributes nutrition education posters and curriculum-aligned worksheets to over 3,300 schools in rural and urban areas throughout South Africa through its Pick n Pay School Club platform.

South Africans can access any of these initiatives by reaching out to the Pick n Pay registered dietitian at healthhotline@pnp.co.za or by visiting www.pnp.co.za/livewell/health-resources which hosts various downloadable health leaflets for managing multiple health conditions. **SR**