



# FDF Action on Fibre

## The role of dietary fibre in sugar reduction

In the UK, adults on average eat almost double the recommended amount of sugar<sup>i</sup>. There is a lot of public health messaging around the importance of reducing the amount of sugar we eat, and industry are working hard towards government guidelines on sugar reduction through various mechanisms such as reformulation and reducing portion size. But did you know that fibre can play an important role in reducing sugar in products?

Dietary fibre is a group of substances that are not completely broken down through digestion. There are various ways to categorise fibre but fermentability and viscosity are currently considered the most relevant. The type of fibre depends on where it is found, for example cellulose is found in green plant cell walls; beta-glucans in oats, barley and fungi; and pectin in fruit, vegetables and legumes<sup>ii</sup>. These various types of fibre have many different functional properties that can be used in food.

For example, sugar provides sweetness and volume for products so when reducing sugar content fibre can be added to provide the volume. Fibre can also help with improving the texture and mouthfeel of products when sugar or fat has been removed<sup>iii iv</sup>. Manufacturers can use various types of fibre to help achieve sugar reduction whilst helping to maintain the flavour and texture of products.

FDF Members have used various techniques, including fibre, to achieve sugar reduction. Our [Feeding Change report](#) has a wide range including; Macphie using inulin in reduced sugar cake mixes and frostings and Jordans, Dorest Ryvita using chicory root as a replacement for added sugar. In 2020, [Aunt Bessie's, Nomad Foods](#) won the FDF Diet and Health Award for reducing sugar in seven of their biggest selling desserts while also increasing fibre.

As well as supporting sugar reduction, using fibre in this way can also help people to increase their fibre intakes. Currently in the UK only 9% of adults meet the recommended amount of fibre per day and only 1 in 3 adults<sup>v</sup> know that the recommendation is 30g. This is important as a diet high in fibre has many health benefits including improved digestive health, reduced risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and certain types of cancer<sup>ii</sup>.

In September FDF launched [Action on Fibre](#), an industry-led initiative to help consumers bridge the gap between current intakes and the dietary recommendation. [Companies signed](#)



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[up to Action on Fibre](#) have pledged various actions to help bridge the gap, including launching new products and innovations to the market that are higher in fibre and reformulating current products to increase the fibre content.

Our FDF Scotland colleagues recently hosted a Focus on Fibre [webinar](#) and [podcast](#) with information on functional fibres and how they play a starring role in reformulation by helping to not only increase fibre but also reduce levels of fat, sugar and calories to meet UK nutritional targets.

Further information about using fibre to support sugar reduction can be found at:

- [FDF Reformulation Guide – Spotlight on Sugars](#)
- [IFST – Semi-solid fibre syrup for sugar reduction in cookies](#)
- [IFST – Fibre: the rough with the smooth interactive event](#)

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<sup>i</sup> [NDNS: results from years 9 to 11 \(2016 to 2017 and 2018 to 2019\)](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [BNF - The science of fibre](#)

<sup>iii</sup> [Dietary fibre in foods: a review](#)

<sup>iv</sup> [IFST - Dietary Fibre](#)

<sup>v</sup> [FDF Consumer polling on fibre](#)