

Ministry of International trade, Industry, Commerce & Consumer Affairs



Department of Consumer Affairs World Consumer Rights Day 2015



➤ *Helping Consumers Choose Healthy Diets*



World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated annually on March 15th to highlight solidarity within the international consumer movement.

The Department of Consumer Affairs St. Kitts join with Consumer International and other regional territories in celebrating World Consumer Rights Day 2015, under the theme' **Helping Consumers Choose Healthy Diets**'. Is it with this in mind that we at the Department of Consumer Affairs see it fitting to continue our educational program to educate Consumers on their **Rights and Responsibilities**.

A Healthy Nation is a Wealthy Nation and so we are urging Consumers to Choose Healthy foods products, eat more fruits daily, stay away from oily and fatty food, vegetables is a must in your daily intake and drinking of healthy and fruity drinks, and to build strong bones and lasting memories exercise along with healthy diets let you live a longer and healthier life.

The world at large has been face with several chronic illnesses and these are causes from unhealthy diets, salty and sugary food products, and unhealthy environments. Consumers should make sure that the vendors who are selling food for immediate consumption purposes should display their Food Handlers Permit and preparation and serving of food is done in a clean and safe environment.

Consumers should read labels on food packages, make informed choices, handle and prepare food safely and practicing the keys to safer food at home, grow fruits and vegetables in their back yard.

The right to free choose is one of the eight basic consumer rights. A consumer should be able to select from a range of food products and services; offered at competitive prices with an assurance of satisfactory quality. This gives the consumers, the freedom to choose the best possible deal, safer and healthy food products and hold the seller accountable for the quality of the goods sold or services rendered.

For the wider economy, the right to free choose is fundamental to the creation of a genuinely competitive market that drives innovation, and rewards businesses which deliver quality products and services, and helping Consumers to choose healthy food and a safe and healthy environment. Consumers should **not** be subjected to unfair prices, poor service, and poor and unhealthy food or irresponsible corporate behaviour because of a lack of choice.

Consumers need to be aware of their **Rights and Responsibilities** and with this knowledge be educated about the various practices; **'An ounce of preventive consumer education is worth many pounds of cure'**. But what should you do when disappointment invades even the smartest purchasers? For instance, salespersons' and advertisements make promises their products can't keep, a federal study indicated that approximately one of four purchases results in a consumer problem, yet only one in 25 consumers with a problem actually take the time and effort to complain.

Be careful when you're dealing with the following businesses, which have numerous complaints lodged against them, especially businesses that sell food for immediate consumption uses. You have a good chance of getting redress if you take the trouble to address the problem, you may not get what you paid for, and you might end up more frustrated than if you hadn't complained at all and that is if you don't complain in a firm and respectable businesslike manner.

Complaining and correcting your problem helps others as well as oneself, and this also helps the business place to correct their mistakes and make consumers comfortable, safe and healthy and their business trustworthy and consumer friendly.

There are several steps in filing a complain

- Identify the problem; go through the event leading up to your problem, date and time of purchase, and dissatisfaction.
- Deciding on who to contact first, or last.
- What transpired when you when to file your complaint?
- Call the business that you purchase your goods or service performed, calmly and thoroughly file a complaint. Politely explain how you would like your problem resolved.





DO YOU KNOW YOUR CONSUMER Rights?

1. The Right to satisfaction of basic needs
2. The Right to safety
3. The Right to be informed
4. The Right to choose
5. The Right to be heard
6. The Right to redress
7. The Right to Consumer education
8. The Right to a healthy and sustainable environment



“In a strong culture of health, I am more likely to do what’s good for me.”

World Consumer Rights Day

The International Consumer movement observes 15th March as the World Consumer Rights Day. It was on this day during 1962 that the then American President, John F Kennedy gave an overall structure to the consumer rights.

It is during the WCRD that the roles and the rights of the consumer are explained, insisting that these are given due respect and to fight against the wrong doings and injustice meted out to them by the market. The World Consumer Right Day was first observed during 15th March 1983 and since then it has become a very important day in terms of gathering citizens and insisting them to lend their voice towards their rights.

CI is the primary source for organizing various initiatives and helping the media cover the consumer rights movement that are held by the various organizations that are interested in consumer welfare in most of the countries across the globe. These consumer organizations get good coverage through this media exposure.

Some of the steps taken by these consumer organizations to increase awareness about consumer rights are regular workshops, seminars, publications, press conferences, exhibitions, campaigns, theatre shows and many more. Some consumer welfare organizations also make use of the materials from CI to fight for the rights and benefits of the consumers.



Who is a Consumer

Any individual who purchases products or services for his personal use and not for manufacturing or resale is called a consumer. A consumer is one who is the decision maker whether or not to buy an item at the store, or someone who is influenced by advertisement and marketing. Every time someone goes to a store and buys a shirt, toy, beverage or anything else, they make a decision as a consumer. Consumer refers to any person who purchases some goods for a consideration that has been either paid or promised to pay or partly paid and partly promised, or found under any system of deferred payment and does include any user of this type of goods other than the person who purchases these types of goods for consideration paid or promised or partly paid or partly promised, or under any type of system of deferred payment when this type of use is done with the agreement of such person, and does not include a person who gets such goods for resale or for any business purpose or hires or avails of some services for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised, or under some system of deferred payment as well as includes some beneficiary of such services other than the people who 'hire or avail of the services for consideration paid or promised, or partly paid and partly promised, or under any system of deferred payment, when such services are provided having the approval of the first described person and does not include a person who takes such services for any business purposes.

World Consumer Rights Day

GETTING HEALTHCARE RIGHT

WCRD 2015: Healthy diets

Unhealthy diets are linked to **four of the ten biggest causes of death worldwide**: overweight and obesity, high blood pressure, high blood glucose and high cholesterol. Obesity alone is estimated to cost **US\$2 trillion per year**. It really is time the world woke up to the price of unhealthy diets.



It is why Consumer International has decided to make helping consumers choose healthy diets the theme of World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) 2015.

All consumers deserve the right not just to food, but to healthy food. A binding global treaty would ensure consumers easy access to healthy food and lead to a more equitable, sustainable food system.

The rise in diet related diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and some cancers represents a major international public health crisis. The number of overweight and obese people continues to rise and, to date, not a single country has been successful in reversing the increase.

The impact of poor diets on health now exceeds that of smoking. The impact of obesity on global GDP is equivalent to the cost of war, gun violence and terrorism. This is a problem that affects people in the developed and developing world, with the fastest increases occurring in the global south.

Consumers and consumer choices are central to resolving this problem. The availability and affordability of unhealthy foods, the marketing practices of large international food companies and the lack of information available to consumers makes it increasingly hard to choose a healthy diet. Despite a growing international consensus about the factors that are driving the rise in obesity and diet related disease, the response from industry and government is far too slow.

Our activities for WCRD 2015 will focus on our call on the WHO for an International Convention to Protect and Promote Healthy Diets – using a similar mechanism to the Framework

Convention for Tobacco Control, which has undoubtedly helped reduce smoking deaths and disease.

In addition, by highlighting the practices of international food and drink companies, it has the potential to directly influence their behaviour.

CI has done extensive policy work on this issue for which we are internationally recognized. We have strong international partners and we are well placed to be a leading voice.

At the World Health Assembly in May 2014, we launched our call for a Global Convention on healthy diet and published a set of recommendations for Member States to consider.

In November 2014 we co-authored an open letter to the heads of WHO and FAO calling for a Global Convention. This letter has already secured the public support of over 330 international health experts.

World Consumer Rights Day will be the next push in our efforts to secure Member States support for a Global Convention and its eventual adoption by the WHO.

Recommendations on healthy diets

Consumers International publication Recommendations towards a Global Convention to protect and promote healthy diets, were developed jointly with World Obesity Federation, calling on the international community to commit to comprehensive action to address unhealthy diets, which now rank above tobacco as the world's leading driver of preventable NCDs.

Consumer access to safe and nutritious food cannot be taken for granted. Health risks associated with changing diets, new threats to food safety, and unstable food prices all threaten this basic consumer need. CI's accreditation to key organizations' like the WHO, Codex and FAO, as well as our ability to co-ordinate advocacy at a global level, means we're well placed to support and represent our members in this important area.

"I have a pretty good sense of what health care costs me, but I still underestimate what it costs my employer."

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some cancers are major causes of death and illness around the world. One of the four main risk factors for NCDs is unhealthy diet. The dramatic rise in obesity in children and youth worldwide means children are at an increased risk and related chronic diseases in adulthood.

Tackling the crisis in childhood obesity requires a number of actions to improve children's diets and promote exercise. Greater attention must be given to which foods and beverages children are encouraged to consume. Several major reviews of evidence on the impact of food marketing to children show a connection between food marketing and children's food preferences, purchase requests and consumption patterns.

In many countries, the development of policy to meet the objectives set out by WHO recommendations is a new area, and Governments will need to assess the current extent of exposure and influence of food and beverage marketing to children.

Food marketing is directed at children via a wide range of marketing communications channels, and most campaigns are integrated across a variety of broadcast and non-broadcast channels. Recommendations must specify that the aim should be to reduce the impact on children of foods high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars, or salt, in order to determine the healthfulness of a product marketed to children, a definition of what is meant by 'unhealthy' should be established.

- **How to define unhealthy foods:** Products that are marketed to children are sorted into food groups and food categories, or sub-groups. An evaluation of the healthfulness of the products can then be made using common understanding of whether products in specific food groups or categories can be said to contribute to a healthy diet, and to make some conclusions as to the nature and healthfulness of typical food products directed at children. Such an evaluation will include a degree of subjectivity, and is not based on any specified cut-off points 'High of Unhealthy'
- Several Nutrient-Profiling (NP) models have been developed for the purpose of monitoring marketing of foods to children and to define whether a product is healthy or unhealthy.
- A product's nutritional information is needed in order to evaluate the products, this information may be found on the nutrition information panel of the product packaging, and it may be obtained from the manufacturer's website or by contacting the manufacturer directly.

Monitoring of Unhealthy Products

- When setting dates of monitoring, one should take into consideration of seasonal and weekly variations in the frequency of different marketing campaigns. Some marketing strategies are short term, medium term or long term and some may run intensively in a given period of time, and then there is very little activity after that.
- Some Brands or Products may use regular but infrequent promotions, avoid monitoring on or in days leading up to any seasonal or religious events as this can have temporal impact on the marketing techniques used, as you might see a lot of special promotions.
- Always save an image of any kind of marketing communications, depending on what marketing channel is monitored, data collection and coding may take place independently of each or simultaneously.