

NewsLetter



FSA Changes advice on slush ice drinks

In September 2023, a risk assessment undertaken by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) resulted in them publishing guidance that slush ice drinks should not be consumed by children under the age of 4.

Slush ice drinks can contain glycerol as a substitute for sugar to create the slush effect and the FSA's guidance recommended that businesses only add glycerol at the minimum quantity technically necessary to achieve this effect.

While glycerol is found in some other foods, it is added at much lower quantities than in slush ice drinks. Consumed at high levels, glycerol can cause very low blood sugar levels and unconsciousness in young children.

The FSA's risk assessment considered a worst-case exposure scenario in which a child consumed a 350 ml slush drink containing the highest level of glycerol used (50,000 mg/L) and compared this to a threshold above which adverse effects could occur. The FSA concluded that children aged 4 or below would exceed this threshold.

This advice was republished in 2024 but last week the FSA announced that they had revisited their risk assessment on the use of glycerol. The FSA now advise that slush ice drinks should not be consumed by children under the age of 7.

What should slush ice brand owners do?

The FSA have yet to publish fully amended guidance but have indicated that Brand owners should:

- ensure customers are aware of the FSA's risk assessment of the use of glycerol in slush ice drinks.
- formulate products to contain glycerol at the minimum quantity technically necessary to achieve the required 'slush' drink effect.
- Limit cup sizes
- Provide written warning visible at point of sale:
- "Product contains glycerol. Not recommended for children under the age of 7'.

Free refills are not recommended in venues where children under 10 years of age will consume them.

Why the change in advice?

The FSA state that the new guidance forms a 'greatly enhanced voluntary approach' for industry to help manage glycerol intake in young children over the longer-term.

The original risk assessment considered the impact of slush drinks on children of average body weight whereas the latest risk assessment takes a more precautionary approach by considering the adverse effects on children with a lower-than-average body weight for their age. As children's weights vary, body weight has been converted to age to provide more practical advice for parents and businesses.

More information

- [FSA updates advice on risk to children of glycerol in slush ice drinks](#)
- [FSA Board Paper](#)