We’re losing the war on obesity so why is a sugar tax so hard to swallow?

The tax on sugary drinks has been the subject of many debates in recent years, with many experts arguing that it is not effective in reducing obesity.

According to the New Zealand Government, sugary drinks contribute to a quarter of the total sugar intake in children’s diets, making them the biggest sugar contributor. In addition, a recent survey found that 60% of children have drunk a sugary drink in the past month.

Obesity costs the New Zealand healthcare system over $722 million every year.

In about 25,000 children aged under 5 have rotten teeth pulled each year.

What would an environmental change look like?

As well as a tax on sugary drinks in its war against obesity, the WHO recommends other price policies, such as subsidies for, or lower taxation of, healthy foods as well as initiatives to encourage people to eat a healthier diet and be more physically active.

**Mexico**

Since 2017, 35% of its population is overweight or obese, with a 15% sugar tax since 2014, which has seen a 12% decrease in consumption. This has been instrumental in a nationwide campaign to improve the availability of low-calorie drinks and increased consumption of fruit and milk, leading to a decrease in obesity.