

# Bird & Bird ATMD

## Ministry of Health announces mandatory nutrition labels and advertisement ban for unhealthy pre-packaged sugar-sweetened beverages

November 2019



*The Ministry of Health, Singapore ("MOH") has taken yet another firm step in its 'war on diabetes'. The latest measures target pre-packaged sugar-sweetened beverages ("SSBs") such as soft drinks and juices. The measures are mandatory front of pack ("FOP") nutrition labels and advertisement ban for unhealthy SSBs.*

### Background

According to MOH, Singapore has the highest prevalence of diabetes among high-income countries. As the number of diabetics will likely top 1 million by 2050, MOH declared 'war on diabetes' and has taken various steps to help the public adopt healthier eating habits and lifestyles, such as the Healthier Choice Symbol Programme and the National Steps Challenge.

According to MOH, the average Singaporean consumes 12 teaspoons of sugar a day, 6 teaspoons more than the World Health Organisation's recommended amount. In its latest measures, MOH has targeted SSBs as 64% of Singaporeans' sugar intake comes from SSBs.

### What are the measures?

The first is mandatory FOP nutrient-summary label for less healthy SSBs. The label will be graded and colour coded based on nutrition, to help consumers make better choices. The sugar content of the SSB will be the main determinant for the FOP grade; other factors may include the amount of saturated fat.

The second is a total advertisements ban for SSBs which receive the lowest FOP grade. The ban will

apply to all local mass media platforms, such as broadcast, print, out-of-home and online channels. While other countries have implemented limited restrictions on advertisements for unhealthy food, Singapore will be the first to ban all advertisements for the least healthy SSBs.

The measures will apply to all SSBs including Asian drinks (e.g. chrysanthemum tea and barley drink), soft drinks, energy drinks, juices, malted drinks, cultured milk/yogurt drinks, and 3-in-1 or 2-in-1 instant drinks.

### When will the measures take effect?

MOH has not announced a date by which the measures will be implemented. MOH will be conducting consumer focus groups and obtaining feedback from the relevant industries on the implementation of the measures. More details will be announced in 2020.

### What's the impact to consumers and businesses?

The measures are welcomed news for consumers. The mandatory FOP nutrient labels and advertisement ban for unhealthy SSBs will help consumers make more informed choices and

prompt manufacturers to reduce the sugar content of SSBs. As consumers adopt better eating habits and become more mindful about the risk of high sugar intake, it is imperative that SSB businesses consider how to make their drinks a "siew dai" one (Singapore slang for less sweet).

## Contact Us

For queries or more information, please contact:

**Alban Kang**

Partner

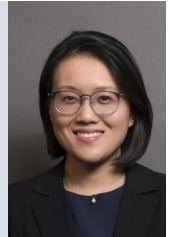
Tel: +65 6428 9828  
alban.kang@twobirds.com



**Yuet Ping Tai**

Associate

Tel: +65 6428 9464  
yuetping.tai@twobirds.com



## twobirds.com

Abu Dhabi & Amsterdam & Beijing & Berlin & Bratislava & Brussels & Budapest & Copenhagen & Dubai & Dusseldorf & Frankfurt & The Hague & Hamburg & Helsinki & Hong Kong & London & Luxembourg & Lyon & Madrid & Milan & Munich & Paris & Prague & Rome & San Francisco & Shanghai & Singapore & Stockholm & Sydney & Warsaw

The information given in this document concerning technical legal or professional subject matter is for guidance only and does not constitute legal or professional advice. Always consult a suitably qualified lawyer on any specific legal problem or matter. Bird & Bird assumes no responsibility for such information contained in this document and disclaims all liability in respect of such information.

This document is confidential. Bird & Bird is, unless otherwise stated, the owner of copyright of this document and its contents. No part of this document may be published, distributed, extracted, re-utilised, or reproduced in any material form.

Bird & Bird is an international legal practice comprising Bird & Bird LLP and its affiliated and associated businesses, which include Bird & Bird ATMD LLP as a Singapore law practice registered as a limited liability partnership in Singapore with registration number T08LLOO1K.

Bird & Bird LLP is a limited liability partnership, registered in England and Wales with registered number OC340318 and is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority. Its registered office and principal place of business is at 12 New Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1JP. A list of members of Bird & Bird LLP and of any non-members who are designated as partners, and of their respective professional qualifications, is open to inspection at that address.