

# Smaller Paddle Pop joins growing list of shrinking treats



Paddle Pop icecreams have a few less licks in them after a size reduction their maker claims is for “nutritional” reasons.

The chocolate, banana and rainbow flavoured icecreams are now 15 per cent smaller than they were. But their \$1.50 price hasn't changed.

Streets' parent company, Unilever, says the icecreams were downsized from 82ml to 70ml last year because they were sold in school canteens and had to meet “nutritional guidelines for schools and our strict internal guidelines that govern what products we market for children”.

Unilever spokeswoman Jennie James said Paddle Pops' fat and kilojoules had been cut by about 20 per cent, but still had other nutritional benefits such as being low GI, portion-controlled and a source of calcium.

But Wayne Attwell, a senior brand strategist with marketing consultants Bold Horizon, believes the company's motive is financial.

The smaller Paddle Pops join a growing list of shrinking products, which Mr Attwell said were usually downsized to cut costs.

Some people would say it's smart accounting, others would say it's diddling the consumer,” he said. “I suspect all of these things are driven by economic means.

“If you're really doing it for a genuine thing, like you want to reduce the consumption by kids, then reduce the

price accordingly or take the difference in price and invest it in some children's programme. Don't look to be skimming the margin.”

Cadbury came under fire when it reduced its chocolate blocks from 250g to 200g, and came in for further criticism after adding palm oil to its chocolate recipe. It later dropped the oil.

Mars reduced its Mars bars from 60g to 53g, Twix from 58g to 53g, and also produced smaller bags of M&M's, Pods and Maltesers.

Last November, Tip Top reduced the size of four of its specialty ice cream tubs from 2 litre to 1.6 litre.

The ice-cream maker said the smaller tubs were packed with more “exciting bits” but said the change was necessary to prevent the price of all products going up.

Not only sweet treats are affected - Anchor reduced its cheese blocks from 1kg to 900g.

Mr Attwell said it was often hard for buyers to see the difference because the bigger products were not left around for comparison.

Consumer NZ spokeswoman Maggie Edwards said companies could reduce a product's size without changing the price as long as the size or weight was not advertised with the price label.

■ By Beck Vass, Consumer Affairs Reporter.

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