By David Scott

FOUR in 10 Scots teens regularly consume fizzy drinks, new research has revealed.

The investigation has again sparked concern among health chiefs of the long-lasting impact of the country’s poor diet.

The vast majority of those quizzed who admitted buying a carbonated drink did not eat lunch at their school canteen, where such products are banned.

But those who bought sugar-sweetened drinks were significantly more likely to eat foods high in fat, sugar and/or salt at lunchtime, as well as at mid-morning break, than those who did not consume fizzy drinks.

Researchers from the University of Hertfordshire found some respondents who drank sugary drinks but did not eat at lunchtime at all. Professor Wendy Wills said: “These findings are of major concern, as research has not only found an association between regular sugar-filled drink consumption and weight gain, metabolic syndrome and obesity, but also an increased risk of type-2 diabetes.

“While we need a strategy to reduce the consumption of sugar-filled drinks by young people, simply removing access to soft drinks within schools is clearly not enough.”

The government recently announced a tax, or levy, will come into effect in April 2018.

It is expected this will apply to drinks containing more than five grams of sugar per 100ml, with a higher rate for drinks containing more than eight grams per 100ml.