

Russia Considers Japan-Style Fine for 'Excessively Large' Waistlines

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Russia's health and consumer rights watchdog is considering drawing on Japan's experience in tackling obesity, including fining citizens for large waistlines.

Japan [made it illegal](#) in 2008 for citizens between 40 and 74 years old to exceed the state-prescribed limit of 85 centimeters for male waistlines and 90 centimeters for female waistlines. Russia is on a drive to reduce obesity and improve nutrition as part of President Vladimir Putin's national goals signed after his inauguration in May 2018, which included calls to [ensure](#) sustainable natural population growth.

The plan's health and demography targets are partly [overseen](#) by health and consumer watchdog chief Anna Popova.

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"We've studied the experience of countries with the highest life expectancy very carefully," Rospotrebnadzor's Popova [told](#) the state-run RIA Novosti news agency on Thursday, pointing out Tokyo's experience with waistline reduction, colloquially known in Japan as the "Metabo-law."

"The applicability [of the practice] to Russia and Russian citizens is a question that will be discussed over our first year of work on the national goals," she said, adding that studies currently being conducted would help reach a conclusion.

Update: Later on Thursday, the watchdog's press service denied that a fine was being considered.

"It was just an example of how it's done in other countries," a spokesperson was cited as saying about Popova's comments by the Govorit Moskva radio station.

"No fines are being considered, of course. We're just studying practices from abroad."

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