

Rajkummar Rao in FSSAI campaign asks people to reduce salt, sugar and fat intake

FSSAI has launched a campaign 'Aaj se thoda kum' featuring actor Rajkummar Rao to nudge people to reduce salt, sugar and fat intake

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Bollywood actor Rajkummar Rao. File photo: Hindustan Times

New Delhi: In a bid to create awareness about the harmful effects of a non-balanced diet, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on Tuesday unveiled a nation-wide campaign 'Aaj se thoda kum' (loosely translated Slightly less from today) featuring actor Rajkummar Rao to nudge citizens to reduce salt, sugar and fat intake. The campaign is a part of the regulator's Eat Right movement which covers food companies, retailers and restaurants and aims to promote healthy and well-balanced diet.

The film, made by production firm Ishan Echoes, features Rao talking directly to the viewers asking them to take measures to control the intake of salt, sugar and fat while

cooking at home. The campaign will be promoted across television, social media and cinema halls.

“Many of these issues in the developed countries like US are a part of their mainstream media debate. In India, the idea is to start a conversation and debate around the consumption of salt, sugar and fat. We may not get it right in the first year but the discussion will evolve and we will be able to achieve our targets of helping people to reduce their consumption of unhealthy ingredients,” said FSSAI chief executive Pawan Agarwal.

FSSAI has also launched a [microsite](#) on the movement which will help consumers to access tips and information on eating right along with the launch of artificial intelligence-powered chat bot ‘Food Funda’ which will address food-related consumer queries.

On the supplier side, the regulator has managed to garner the support of 15 consumer packaged good firms including ITC Ltd, HUL, Nestle and Patanjali Ayurveda Ltd among others which have pledged to reformulate their products reducing unhealthy ingredients and launching healthy products over a period of three to seven years.

“They will also have to abide by the regulations that we come out with in due course of time,” he added.

FSSAI is in the process of drafting guidelines on labelling packaged food products which are high in sugar, salt and fat content. The guidelines are likely to come out in next one year. The food regulator plans to phase-out trans-fats in food products by the edible oil industry, bakeries and ‘halwais’ making India ‘Trans-fats-free by 2022’.

It also plans to promote healthier food options by the food services sector and introduction of menu labelling on nutrition information. The promotion of healthier food options and responsible retail practices by food retailers and e-commerce players is also on regulator’s agenda.

FSSAI said it is in consultation to introduce new regulations for labelling, advertising and claims for packaged food industry aimed at guiding consumers to be more careful about their food choices.

Meanwhile, industry leaders said that they support FSSAI’s movement and intend to work on their product portfolio.

“We already have sugar release control atta under our brand Aashirvaad and we also offer digestive biscuits with no added sugar under the brand Sunfeast . Recently, we have been looking at making juices from pulp and not concentrate. We have continuously looking at ways of reducing added sugar content without compromising on taste and consumer expectation, ” said Hemant Malik, divisional chief executive (foods), ITC.

Acharya Balkrishna, managing director of Patanjali said that their company has always believed in manufacturing well-balanced products which are in line with Indian

Ayurvedic practices. “I believe that consumers should be made aware about harmful effects of consuming products with high sugar or salt content. Sugar is processed through sulphur while jaggery is a good replacement to sweeten food,” he said.