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Trans fat in edible oils: FSSAI likely to meet industry stakeholders next week by Meenakshi Verma Ambwani

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is likely to hold a meeting next week with edible oil companies, medical experts and scientists to discuss a proposal on further reduction in trans fat levels in edible oils.

Earlier this month, the World Health Organisation released a plan to eliminate industrially produced trans fatty acids from the global food supply by 2023. It has called on governments to follow a six-step action plan to achieve this goal.

Last year, FSSAI had reduced the permissible levels of trans fat in edible oils to 5 per cent from 10 per cent. The food safety authority is now looking at a proposal to further reduce trans fat levels to 2 per cent in edible oil.

Last week, FSSAI CEO Pawan Agarwal had said that even before the WHO released its plan on elimination of industrially produced trans fat, India already has put in place a strategy to make India trans fat free . He said India is working on a strategy aimed at making India trans fat free by 2022.

While the natural sources of trans fat are dairy and meat products, partially hydrogenated edible oils have been identified as the key source for industrially-produced trans fat.

Last year, FSSAI had also notified standards on re-use or reheating of cooking oil. It states that vegetable oils that have accumulated the total polar compounds (TPC) of more than 25 per cent cannot be used. These standards will come into force from July 1 and the regulator believes enforcement of these regulations will help solve part of the problem.