

FSSAI issues guidance note for handling & disposal of used cooking oil

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Shraddha Joshi, Mumbai

FSSAI, the country's apex food regulator, has released a guidance note for handling and disposal of used cooking oil (UCO). The issued document covered such subjects as disposal of UCO, procedures to be followed for handling and disposal of UCO by small and big food business operators (FBOs), household level and guidelines provided under the Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011.

Often, the quality of the edible vegetable oils used to frying of foods, deteriorates. Using same oil repeatedly for frying leads to changes in the physico-chemical, nutritional, sensory properties of the oil and formation of total polar compounds (TPCs), which makes the oil, unfit for human consumption beyond certain limits leading to several diseases such as hypertension, atherosclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, liver disease, etc.

Also, UCO from organised FBOs reportedly finds its way to small restaurants or dhabas and road-side vendors, which may lead to adverse health effects.

The guidance document highlighted the key takeaway points for handling and discarding the UCO. It strictly mentioned to avoid the repeated use of cooking oil for frying, while at the household level, it should be filtered after using it once for frying and later used for curry preparation in order to make it economical.

It informed that UCO should be consumed in a day or two and not stored for long duration, as the rate of deterioration is high. UCO should be discarded when a blue-grey smoke appears, or tough foam is formed, become dark or murky, consistency of oil changes and oil developed TPC of over 25 per cent.

With regards to its disposal, the key takeaway points were to discard UCO in an environment friendly way by selling it to the authorised UCO aggregators or collection agencies and definitely not to discard in drains or sewerage systems.

Thus, the document issued by FSSAI outlines the standard operating procedure for safe handling and disposal of UCO.

Procedures given out for small FBOs to follow includes not using same oil for more than three times.

Ideal to use only once, cooking oil should be filtered frequently to remove food particles, discarding the UCO in environment-friendly by selling it to the authorised UCO aggregators or collection agencies that are registered with authorised agencies such as state bio-diesel boards, the Bio-diesel Association of India and other agencies nominated by the state government to collect such oil for the manufacture of bio-diesel or any other industrial purpose, should keep UCO away from flame, gas cylinders, etc., and should refrain buying UCO for manufacturing their food products.

Procedures given out for big FBOs to follow includes points like oils with TPC limit of 25 per cent should be discarded and put in a separate container, proper labelling on container to avoid cross-contamination, transferring the used cooking oil safely into the collecting drums provided by authorized collection agency.

All FBOs are required to maintain a record whose consumption of edible oils for frying is more than 50kg or litre per day. The record should have following details like date, name of the oil, quantity of oil used in frying, quantity consumed at the end of the day, quantity discarded at the end of the day, mode and date of disposal of UCO and UCO collected by (the name of authorised agency).