

Eliminating high fat, salt & sugar top priority, doc presented to Modi

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Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is focussing on eliminating high fat, salt and sugar, from food commonly called as HFSS or junk food. In a vision document presented before Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a review meeting recently, the MOHFW has a stated goal of moving away from HFSS foods.

The review meeting was called by the PMO for listing of the priority areas for future scope of work and assessment on the on-going projects where the departmental secretaries gave presentation.

The aim was to determine gap areas and remedies for same and the Ministry of Health identified 'Food Free from High Fat, Salt, and Sugar' as one of its priority focus areas.

As reported earlier, the apex food regulator, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is working on labelling of food considered high on fat, salt and sugar. However, the issue became a bone of contention between the industry and the regulator and the draft notification was shelved.

Further an expert committee was constituted by the Ministry of Health which submitted a report, following which the FSSAI decided to separate the regulations pertaining to front of the pack and general labelling norms.

Meanwhile, the FSSAI has issued a draft notification saying that foods which are referred to as HFSS cannot be sold to school children in school canteens/ mess premises/ hostel kitchens or within 50 metre of school campus.

The draft regulations have provisions about responsibilities of school authority to ensure safe food and healthy diets on school premises, promotion of safe and healthy foods in and around the school premises, food marketing and advertisement to school children, and monitoring & surveillance.

The draft also talks about general guidance for providing safe and wholesome food to

children in which the food is divided into three categories. The Eat Adequately category, will include 70-80% food of the menu, Eat Moderately category, includes packaged food and other similar stuff to be eaten occasionally in small portions, and third category Eat Sparingly, includes HFSS food, regulations say it should be discouraged.