

## **Festive season adulteration: Unsafe food to invite jail term, fine up to ₹5L**

The UT health department will start raiding food outlets, mostly sweetmeat shops, from September 30

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In wake of the festive season, the health department will start raiding food outlets, mostly sweetmeat shops, from Monday, for which four teams have been constituted.

The UT health department has set up a 24-hour helpline number (0172-2782457) for registering of public complaints.

In addition to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) regulations, UT's director of health services, Dr G Dewan said that food safety officers and medical officers of health facilities are empowered under the Epidemic Disease Act to take immediate action to destroy food articles unfit for human consumption on the spot, to deal with violators.

### **EDUCATION RATHER THAN ENFORCEMENT**

He said the motive of the health administration was not enforcement through strict rules but also educating the vendors about the hazards of selling unsafe food.

Last year, around 10 samples failed the tests and were unsafe for human consumption, officials said. More than 50 raids were conducted and 52 samples were taken during the time for further testing, they added.

“Seven out of 10 tests were found unsafe for consumption. They have been penalised and other three will face the heat soon,” an official of the food safety wing of health

administration said. However, no punishment was granted for the 15 challans issued during the Diwali raids, and the cases are lying in the courts, he said.

### **VIOLATORS MAY BE JAILED**

The health department has urged the vendors to comply with the provisions of licensing like safe food and proper sanitation. For selling sub-standard food, the fine is up to ₹5 lakh, and for misbranding up to ₹3 lakh; for unsafe food, the matter goes to chief judicial magistrate, under which there is a provision of one-year jail and fine money is decided by the magistrate.

Health officials said people should consume sweetmeat items within 24 hours and ensure only silver foil is used for wrapping them.