

Healthy diet: FSSAI bans sales, ads of junk foods in school canteens, within 50 metres of campus

By: [PTI](#) |

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As per the regulations, "Foods which are referred to as food products high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium (HFSS) cannot be sold to school children in school canteens/mess premises/hostel kitchens or in an area within fifty meters from the school gate in any direction."

At the heart of these regulations is a fundamental idea to make it clear what is healthy for children and what is not, it added. (Representational image)

Sales and advertisements of junk foods in school canteens and within 50 metres around school campuses has been banned in order to promote safe and wholesome food for children, regulator FSSAI said on Tuesday.

The Food Safety and Standards (Safe Food and healthy diets for School Children) Regulations, 2020 in this regard has been notified now after consideration of stakeholders' comments, FSSAI said in a statement.

"Sufficient transition time will be given to all stakeholders before enforcing these regulations," the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said.

Meanwhile, FSSAI would direct State Food Authorities/Department of School Education to frame safe and balanced diets for children in school in accordance with the general guidance given in these regulations, it added.

As per the regulations, "Foods which are referred to as food products high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium (HFSS) cannot be sold to school children in school canteens/mess premises/hostel kitchens or in an area within fifty meters from the school gate in any direction."

Also, food business operators (FBOs) manufacturing HFSS foods are "barred from advertising and marketing of such foods to children in school premises including through logos, brand names, posters, textbook covers etc. or in an area within fifty meters from the school gate in any direction."

The school authority should ensure that a board containing warning "Do not sell (including free sale or market or advertise) the food products high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium within school premises or campus" in English or one Indian language, as applicable, is displayed prominently at the entrance gate or gates of the school. Besides, a license will have to be obtained for selling or catering school meals by the school authority itself or FBOs contracted by the school authority.

FBOs contracted by the state government for operation of Mid-day Meal Scheme will also have to get the license.

They have to comply with the requirements of sanitary and hygienic practices to the food service establishments as specified under schedule 4 of the Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011, the FSSAI added.

FSSAI said schools should adopt a comprehensive program for promoting 'safe food and balanced diets' amongst school children, and to convert school campuses into 'Eat Right Campus' focusing on provision of safe and healthy food, local and seasonal food and developing practices amongst kids on food waste as per the specified benchmarks.

To promote consumption of a safe and balanced diet in the school as per the guidelines issued by the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), the school authority should engage nutritionists, dietitians to assist in the preparation of menu for the children, periodically.

There should be regular inspection of premises to ensure that safe, balanced and hygienic food is served to students and a 'Health and Wellness Ambassador' or 'Health and Wellness Team' may be appointed as the nodal persons to monitor availability of safe, balanced and hygienic food, it said.

The local public authorities, in addition to state food authority, should ensure compliance of these regulations.

The regulation also provides for creation of a sub-committee by the State Level Advisory Committee for monitoring implementation of these regulations and to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food to school children.

"It is important that right eating habits should be ingrained in children right from early childhood. The importance of a healthy and balanced diet leads to development of cognitive ability in children and helps them learn better and grow healthy," FSSAI said.

At the heart of these regulations is a fundamental idea to make it clear what is healthy for children and what is not, it added.