

## How a dash of hygiene can spice up their food business

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*Street food vendors in Mulund's famous khaugallis get lessons and training on hygiene from a team of food auditors; drive was a part of FSSAI's Eat Right India movement.*

Food is best relished when it is hygienic.

Roadside vendors selling lip-smacking street food in Mulund's famous khaugallis on Friday got this lesson and many other tips from a team of auditors, who not only made them aware about the need to follow basic hygiene and safety standards while cooking and serving delicacies, but also the minute aspects of food contamination.

The drive was conducted by Equinox Labs, an agency conducting water, food and air tests, in a collaborative initiative with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI) Eat Right India movement.

Armed with their hygiene kits, comprising gloves and hair caps, the auditors from Equinox Labs spread across the khaugallis on Ambedkar Road, Sarvodaya Nagar and MG Road, approached the street food stalls and explained to the vendors how the minutest contamination of food can lead to diseases. Also, better hygiene standards would draw more customers, leading to more business.

*The vendors were told that they must always use separate cloths for different activities and serve food warm or at room temperature*

Chandraprabha Tambe, 26, one of the auditors, informed a dabeli and Chinese

the vendor that a wet wooden chopping board used to cut veggies breeds bacteria. The vendor was urged to wear gloves to prevent cutting his finger while chopping veggies.

“Wash hands regularly after visiting the toilet, coughing or sneezing. If you have wounds or cuts, they should be covered properly,” Tambe told a chaat vendor. AshwiniPai, another auditor, told a sandwich vendor to not use the same rag that he used to wipe utensils to clean the processing surface.

Puneet Shetty, who has been serving masala dosas since the past 25 years, learnt that food should be served either at room temperature or hot. “Cold food carries germs. Don’t use the same mop for everything. And if you are serving non-vegetarian items, it should be offered in different utensils,” Tambe told him.

Panipuri vendor RajendraSohantara admitted that he used a basic plastic filter to treat water before making panipuri and chutneys. “After today’s sensitisation drive, I know that we should use properly filtered water. We don’t want our customers to fall sick,” Sohantara said.

*The auditors from food testing company Equinox Labs distributed hair caps and gloves to the food vendors in Mulund.*

Even paan vendors were educated about the dos and don’ts of hygiene. They were asked not to use fingers, but spatula or spoon while applying chuna on betel leaves.

Many of the stall owners welcomed the on-the-spot training, saying that it will help serve customers in a better way. The hair nets and gloves were the added attraction.

“I will use water only after properly filtering it. I also promise to wear this hair cap and gloves. I will be able to draw more customers if I can raise my hygiene standards,” said Tribhuvan Bind, a fresh fruit juice seller.

The FSSAI has launched the Eat Right India movement in order to spread awareness about eating right and safe food. The three factors which Eat Right India is addressing are Eat Safe, Eat Healthy and Eat Fortified.

After a massive success of its hygiene training held at the famous khaugallis of Ghatkopar, Equinox Labs has taken this initiative forward to Mulund.



A leaflet listing the dos and don'ts