

Your favourite samosa and gulab jamun may soon be a ‘healthy’ food option, thanks to FSSAI

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Your favourite [tea time](#) snack samosa and all-time favourite sweet dessert *gulab jamun* may soon be a ‘healthy’ food option, thanks to FSSAI! Wondering how? The country’s food regulator, FSSAI has been working on setting thresholds for fat, salt and sugar levels for the Indian consumer’s most popular ‘sweets and snacks’ category, as per CNBC-TV18 report. In fact, many of these are classified as being under the ‘HFSS’ category or more accurately, the ‘high fats, sugar and salt’ food category.

According to a CNBC-TV18 report, the decision to set specific benchmarks came up at a meeting that FSSAI held with the country’s top homegrown manufacturers in the food segment including Haldiram’s, Bikanervala, etc.

Besides setting the threshold for fats, salt and sugar for HFSS category, manufacturers will also consider ingredient thresholds and quality parameters of cooking oil.

In 2019, during the festive season of Dussehra and Diwali, officials in different parts of the country kept a check on the quality of food.

In Ranchi, for instance, samples were collected to check the use of artificial colours in sweet preparations and food adulteration. Three shops in the city were found to be using artificial colours that were detected as being harmful for consumption. This came to light when the Ranchi district administration conducted surprise check operations in various shops.

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In Kantar Worldpanel's 'Eat, Drink and Be Healthy' Feb 2019 report on 'How at-home consumption is changing' shares insights on global preferences when it comes to food and beverage consumption. Given how FSSAI is set to monitor fats, salt and sugar levels in the HFSS category, a few notable findings are listed below from the aforementioned study:

1. The drive towards healthier options has led to a dramatic increase in bottled and tap water consumption.
2. Now, more than ever, brands are competing with water at every occasion.
3. Today's consumers want to know exactly what goes into the products they buy. In countries like Spain, home-made juices are flying off the shelves while ready-to-drink products are not selling so well.

Increasingly, convenience is becoming a major driver of people's food choices at home and when they order online. The study finds that people are spending less time cooking at home and prefer to simplify menus. Clearly, this marks a huge impact for categories positioned as 'desserts', the study finds.

With FSSAI rolling out initiatives such as setting thresholds for salt, sugar, fats and cooking oil, it sends out a clear message that safe and hygienic food is a top priority across the country.