

Eat Right – Stay fit and healthy 365 Days a year

Over the last few years, there has been a shift in mortality from communicable to non-communicable diseases like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, cancer and so on, not only in India but also across the world. The four main factors to prevent non-communicable diseases are a healthy diet, physical exercise, avoidance of tobacco and alcohol.

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan, kick-started POSHAN Maah 2019 a year-long social and mass media campaign under the Eat Right India movement.

According to Dr. Harsh Vardhan, the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry will tweet one-message-a-day lighting the theme of eating right for the next 365 days. In addition to the above a new logo, an online Quiz, an Online Course and e-commerce website are being launched to spread awareness about right eating habits.



The basic idea behind this is to flag off a 'Jan Andolan' or mass movement focussing on preventive and promotive health for all against the backdrop of the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease, deficiency of vitamins and minerals as well as rampant foodborne illnesses.

The Eat Right India movement is being spearheaded by FSSAI as a preventive healthcare measure to trigger social and behavioral change through a judicious mix of regulatory measures, combined with soft interventions for ensuring awareness and capacity building of food businesses and citizens alike. This movement is aligned with the Government's flagship

public health programs such as POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anemia Mukht Bharat, Ayushman Bharat Yojana, and Swachh Bharat Mission.

The groundwork for escalating the Eat Right India Movement to the level of a Jan Andolan has been underway during the past few months. FSSAI has put in place robust regulatory measures under three major pillars: Eat Safe, Eat Health and Eat Sustainably. FSSAI has prescribed a limit for Total Polar Compounds (TPC) at 25% in cooking oil to avoid the harmful effects of reused cooking oil. Standards for five fortified staples -wheat flour, rice, oil, milk, and salt to reduce large-scale deficiencies of vitamins and minerals have been notified, in addition to standards for health supplements, nutraceuticals, prebiotics, and probiotics products. To trigger informed consumer choices regulations on 'Advertising and Claims' and mandatory menu labeling has been notified. In addition, labeling provisions have been made for appropriate use of sweeteners for children and pregnant women. To reach the target of Trans-fat Free India by 2022, regulations to reduce trans-fats to less than 2% in all oils, fats, and food products are in place. Promoting sustainability, FSSAI has removed the restriction on the use of returnable bottles and is promoting the use of bamboo instead of plastics.

Preparatory work for creating awareness around mindful eating is also in place, with pilots/prototypes schemes such as Clean Street Food Hubs, Clean and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable markets and Eat Right Campus for schools, colleges, workplaces, and other campuses being successfully tested on a pan-India basis. Food businesses have participated in large-scale training and capacity building programs on ensuring food safety through the Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC) initiative, under which over 1.7 lakh Food Safety Supervisors have been trained and certified. Robust material in the form of Pink Book, Yellow Book, DART Book, informative videos etc are in place and can be accessed through a video library on FSSAI's website.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan, mentioned that Eat Right India takes a holistic approach to food habits that promote health and sustainability. He mentioned that like 'Green Good Deeds', a campaign to protect the environment and promote good living in the country, have found global acceptance, the Eat Right India movement is also poised to become a global best practice with the support of national and international stakeholders. He also urged the media to amplify the key message of this Jan Andolan to citizens and make it popular like Polio Mukht Bharat.

Launching this movement on this platform with the support of stakeholders such as the World Health Organization, along with Ministers and delegates from South East Asian countries, is a landmark event.

Dr. Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, World Health Organization (WHO), remarked, “The Eat Right India movement’s message is close to the heart of what the WHO has been saying all along. Now, this has been put into action by FSSAI, for which I congratulate the Government of India. There has been a shift in the cause of mortality from communicable diseases to non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, cancer and so on, not only in India but also across the world. The four main factors to prevent non-communicable diseases are a healthy diet, physical exercise, avoidance of tobacco and alcohol. Therefore, the message of ‘Eat Right’ should be promoted everywhere. Citizens should choose healthy food and the food industry should manufacture healthy food. The media can be very effective partners in spreading this message. Let us take the Eat Right India movement forward in mission mode.”