

FSSAI'S INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE SAFE AND HEALTHY DIETS

1. Background

Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 mandates FSSAI to ensure availability of safe and wholesome (nutritious) food and promote its consumption by all our citizens to prevent foodborne illnesses and promote healthy living.

- *Section 16(3)(a) of the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 specifically mandates that FSSAI to provide technical support to Central and State Governments on matters which have direct or indirect bearing on food safety and nutrition.*
- *Section 16(3)(n) of the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 mandates FSSAI to promote general awareness as to food safety and food standards.*

FSSAI has hence taken up a series of initiatives in this sphere to transform India's food safety and nutrition landscape by ensuring availability and consumption of safe food and healthy diets by its citizens.

2. Eat Right School

Eat Right School (Safe & Nutritious Food @ Schools) program aims at creating awareness about food safety, nutrition & hygiene among school children, and through them among the community at large. Children are powerful change agents. Messages delivered to, and through children, have the potential to usher in behaviour change and a culture of safe and wholesome food. Since, food habits are developed early in life, adequate coverage of food and nutrition both in curriculum and extra-curricular activities at the school level is essential.

2.1 Implementation of Eat Right School

In order to spread the awareness, it is imperative that schools participate actively in the Eat Right School initiative as under:

1. **Online School Registration Portal (<https://fssai.gov.in/eatrightschool/>)** – A user friendly and comprehensive online portal has been created for school registration, creation of Health & Wellness teams, and access to many activities under Eat Right program. Schools register on the online portal created for ease of adoption, implementation and gain access to credible information.

Status – 22600 schools are registered as on date.

2. **Health and Wellness Coordinators (HWC)**: School teachers and/or parents can be nominated as Health and Wellness Coordinators /Health and Wellness teams. They would be certified by FSSAI by undertaking an online certification program and drive various safe food and nutrition initiatives. Health & Wellness Coordinator Certification is available on the website <https://fssai.gov.in/eatrightschool/>.

Status – 3097 HWC are created, 879 are certified by FSSAI.

2.2. **Curriculum integration**

FSSAI has created a rich repository of content created by domain experts that may be absorbed and adopted for school curriculum for students as well as for Teacher Training Programs (copies enclosed).

- a) **Yellow Books** - Aimed at adoption of scientific & credible content into existing curriculum to increase outreach through education boards at the national & state level. To this effect, FSSAI has developed 'The Yellow Books' to inculcate right eating habits. These are age appropriate in two volumes with each of them targeted at children from grade 1-8. Further, the design ensures that the children are exposed to these concepts through proper and scientifically accurate pedagogy.

Status - Available in 11 languages (English, Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali & Assamese on <https://fssai.gov.in/eatrightschool/>). English version also available on DIKSHA - National Teacher's Platform, created by MHRD for teachers across India.

- b) **Training Manual** - A teacher training manual has also been developed to give an in-depth understanding of the concepts on food safety and nutrition. This content can be integrated into the curriculum used for Teacher Training programs. Using the content, a network of Master Trainers has been created to disseminate training programs across India.

Status - Training Manual available on the FSSAI website (<https://fssai.gov.in/eatrightschool/>) and on DIKSHA. Master trainers - 525 across 5 states/UTs (Delhi, Maharashtra, UP, Goa, Karnataka, Haryana)

- c) **Activity Book** - A fun-filled activity book has been designed to teach and reinforce the message of safe and nutritious food. Along with these, many activities are hosted on the website <https://fssai.gov.in/eatrightschool/>. For example, children to put glitter on their hand and touch various surfaces to see the spread of germs. These activities may be a part of teaching the concepts of food safety, hygiene and nutrition.

Status - 18165 activities have been conducted in schools.

- d) **Food Safety Magic Box**- This has been developed by FSSAI with over 100 easy tests to check food adulteration and make science relevant for students through hands-on experiments that can be conducted using materials readily available in the laboratory.

Status - 2 demonstration workshops conducted for 200 schools. Distributed to 14 schools for testing and feedback.

- e) **DART Book** - The book is a compilation of 100 plus easy tests for Detecting Adulterants with Rapid Testing (DART) and covers common adulterants such as artificial and toxic colours etc. that can be conducted in the class by the teachers and students at home for practical testing and checking of adulteration in food at the home level. The DART book is available online at FSSAI website.

2.3. Engagement Activities/ Outreach/ IEC Support

Going beyond the curricular scope, many activities may be conducted during free time in schools, for example during assembly, S.U.P.W or zero period. The teachers can use the interactive activities and games created and available in the yellow books, and the activity book as easy tools to disseminate information to their students as part of co-curricular activities.

- a. **Mascot Activation** - FSSAI has created Health Mascots - Master & Miss Sehat to deliver simple messages through an interesting edutainment. The key messages are through a short stage-play and jingles. Under CSR or as voluntary activities, many organisations have opted for this form of engagement with schools to create awareness about food safety and nutrition. This may be adopted by school boards as one of the engaging edutainment.

Status - Over 1100 activations in schools & public places across Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Lucknow, Kanpur, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Ahmedabad

- b. **SNF Fellowship** - This is a systematic and structured outreach program where selected College students (Fellows) mentor 10 schools over one year and get a one of a kind chance to work on a large-scale social impact project. This is open to students pursuing Bachelors or Masters degree programs in Food Technology, Nutrition or related fields in recognized academic institutions. The Fellows mobilize students, organize Training for the Health and Wellness Coordinators (HWC), Sehat Team and of the canteen/food handlers. They help the school to prepare a calendar of activities and ensure implementation. In order to increase the outreach, the Department of Education may issue directions to grant requisite permissions for them to gain access into schools.

Status - So far 360 Fellows have reached out to approximately 5lac students in Delhi and Mumbai.

- c. **Eat Right Creativity Challenge** - Planned as a part of celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th year, to inculcate healthy eating habits through their own creativity. The four elements of the Challenge were, 'On the Spot Poster' Competition; Wall Art Competition; Eat Right Sustained Champion School Competition; Digital Creative Competition.

Status - Over 75100 students participated through 3621 schools in Phase 1, the next phase is to be launched soon.

- d. **FSSAI Video Library** - Videos on topics pertaining to food safety, health, hygiene and nutrition has been created by FSSAI using various influential and experts. Celebrities like Virat Kohli (talking about + and - ka khel), Rajkumar Rao (endorsing Aaj se Thoda Kam - low consumption of High Fat, Salt, Sugar), Sakshi Tanwar (Speaking on consuming fortified staples), along with various video logs, movies on trans-fat, series of videos on adulteration etc. have been created which can be played in schools.

3. Regulatory Support

- a. **Food Safety and Standards (Safe Food and Healthy diets for School Children) Regulations, 2019** – FSSAI has drafted regulations to ensure safe food and healthy diets in schools. The main elements are as under:
 - i. Responsibilities of School Authority to ensure safe food and healthy diets on school premises
 - ii. Promotion of safe and healthy foods in and around the school premises:
 - iii. Food marketing and advertisement to school children
 - iv. Monitoring and Surveillance

- b. **Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018** – FSSAI has notified the regulations on Food Fortification to ensure that micronutrient rich diets are provided to the people. Department of School Education and Literacy has directed all States/UTs vide D.O (14-10/2016 MDM 1-2) (EE.5)) and to mandatorily use Fortified Wheat Flour, Fortified Edible Oil and Double Fortified Salt in MDM dated 2nd August, 2017. Direction vide D.O 1-4/2018-Desk (MDM) encourages States to see fortification of foods in a systematic manner through Food Corporation of India starting with rice dated 28th February 2019. FSSAI has created a Food Fortification Resource Centre to support the States along with various development partners to implement the directives. FFRC can assist the Department to assist States/UTs in adopting Food Fortification.

- c. **Licensing, Registration and Training of MDM Kitchen Staff** – As per the FSS Act, 2006 all the Food Business Operators must have an FSSAI license. Training of the Food Safety Supervisor (one trained person per 25 people) through the FOSTAC portal must be done to ensure food safety and hygiene. For ensuring that MDM menu is nutrient dense, our network of nutrition professionals and experts through NetProFaN may be engaged for technical assistance.