

To fight against diseases and obesity, Maharashtra bans junk food in school canteens



Mumbai: The Maharashtra government has restricted the offer of junk food in school canteens. In view of proposals the Center issued more than two years back, the state has advised schools not to offer food 'High in Fat, Salt and Sugar' (HFSS) and has recommended solid options. The choice has been taken taking a gander at youth obesity and related maladies.

The Maharashtra government has additionally proposed more beneficial decisions to junk food. The choice has been taken by the administration considering the ascent in adolescence obesity and related wellbeing issue.

According to the administration's mandate, the more beneficial choices that have been proposed incorporate rice, beats, vegetables, chapattis, wheat upma, payasam, inertly and Wada sambhar, lemonade, jaljeera and coconut water. Albeit many state-run schools don't have canteens, these guidelines can be said to apply to sellers who supply prepacked or precooked food in schools amid lunch breaks.

Schools have also been asked to create awareness among children about healthy eating. "(They) must take help of professionals in the locality and (seek) information on the internet," said the GR.

"The human body is not designed to metabolise large amounts of artificial sugar and this is easily converted to fat. It is also linked to insulin resistance, which is a precursor to diabetes," said Carlyne Remedios, a nutritionist with Saifee Hospital.

Experts also wished the move had come much earlier. "There was always the science to show that HFSS food had negative health effects on children, and so we should have realised the need for a policy decision two or three years ago," said Dr Jagmeet Madan, VP, Indian Dietetic Association. "Nevertheless, it is a welcome step and the least we can do is to minimise the availability of such food to children. "

The Union Ministry of women and child development (MWCD) was frightened by the junk food being devoured by kids, set up an advisory group under the executive of National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad. The board presumed that HFSS (High in Fat, Salt and Sugar) food can build obesity, dental issues, diabetes and even heart issues.