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We Need To Start Teaching Food Safety In Schools By Dushyant Krishnan

When I was in school, the only 'food safety' related stuff that I was taught were the standard 'wash your hands before eating', 'wash vegetables and fruits' and 'boil water before drinking it'. Not only was all of this taught only in the second and third grades, but there was no mention of things like the importance of the kind of water you wash fruit and vegetables in (boiled/purified, NOT tap water), and there was definitely nothing about transfat. Tap water in most parts of India is not potable and carries the risk of serious water borne diseases.

The importance of teaching kids about food safety and good food practices has already been established by several studies. A study published in 1994 found that elementary school students' food safety knowledge scores improved after a food safety curriculum was introduced. Another study, this one published in 2004, found a disconnection between middle school students' food safety knowledge, perceptions and behaviours, and a 2008 study too found that a food safety curriculum successfully increased students' food safety knowledge. The 2008 study also found that the students retained a vast majority of the stuff they learned.

Along with including food safety in school curricula, it is equally important to not only teach it in a way that kids find interesting, but also in a manner that ensures that they remember what they learn.

The FSSAI in India is making an effort to introduce food safety education in school syllabi. It has launched a pan-India 'safe and nutritious food at school' initiative to

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conduct workshops and seminars for students in government and private schools. The initiative aims to train teachers and senior students so that they can give safety tips to others. It also aims to identify and fill gaps in food safety education in school curricula.

The FSSAI has launched the 'Yellow Book' for students to target three categories of students, between the ages of 4-7, 8-13 and 14-17. The book covers a number of subjects, including food safety and hygiene practises. The FSSAI has urged State and Union Territory governments to advise education boards to use the book in schools.

We should be teaching kids about food safety in school because the best time to teach people anything is when they're in school. However, food safety education should not be limited to what I was taught in school. Kids should also be taught things like lifestyle diseases and how to avoid them, what additives are potentially harmful, etc. Staying healthy will go a long way in helping them lead long, happy, and productive lives.