

FSSAI directs Delhi schools to conduct assembly session in noon, says best time to soak Vit D

Mail Today Bureau

HIGHLIGHTS

- FSSAI has directed schools in Delhi to conduct assembly sessions in noon.
- According to FSSAI, afternoon is the best time for students to soak in sunlight.
- This was done to address rising incidence of Vitamin D Deficiencies.



In order to address rising incidence of Vitamin 'D' Deficiencies (VDD) amongst children, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed all schools in the

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national Capital to shift 'morning assembly' session to 'noon assembly'. The food regulator is of the view that afternoon is the best time for students to soak in sunlight for natural absorption of Vitamin D.

Launching a unique initiative, 'Project Dhoop', the FSSAI has collaborated with National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and North MCD Schools. Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI said, "Despite the fact that most children suffer from Vitamin D deficiency in India. Project Dhoop is a unique initiative that urges schools to shift their morning assembly to noon, mainly between 11 am to 1 pm to ensure maximum absorption of Vitamin D by students through natural sunlight."

Studies have found that more than 90 per cent of boys and girls across various cities in India are deficient in Vitamin D. In Delhi alone, 90-97 per cent of school children (aged 6-17 years) have Vitamin D Deficiency and around 10-11 percent of these children exhibit signs of Vitamin D Deficiency, he added.

FSSAI has directed the schools that if the school uniforms are designed such that both forearms and face are exposed to the sunlight.\

"By the simple act of shifting morning assembly in our schools to noon assembly and careful designing of school uniforms, a large percentage of student's Vitamin D requirement will be met," said Ashish Bahuguna, Chairperson, FSSAI.

Health experts say that for Vitamin D, fish and fish products are the only real food sources. For most Indians, Vitamin D is mainly obtained by exposure to sunlight without which deficiency is likely to occur. Sunlight's action on cholesterol in the skin converts the cholesterol to Vitamin D via additional conversions in the liver and kidneys.