

Fat mimicking products set to replace transfat

DECCAN CHRONICLE. | SHAINU MOHAN

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Thiruvananthapuram: In an effort to curb trans fat consumption in the state, the Kerala Commissionerate of Food Safety (KCFS) along with the Directorate of Health Services (DHS) is gearing up to introduce fat mimicking products in the state to replace Vanaspati/Margarine - which is widely used by eateries and bakeries for preparation of proprietary food items especially sweets and deep fried food.

Official sources said that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has agreed to help the state introduce fat mimicking products to cater to the food business industry in the state.

"Partially hydrogenated vegetable oils are the main culprit and source of trans fat. We have organised brainstorming sessions for food business operators in the state, and we did a live demonstration on how to minimise the trans fat levels in the food products. They are ready to avoid vanaspati/margarine if we can provide alternatives which would give the same quality and texture for the food products," said the official.

Interestingly, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and health authorities have already started collecting samples of food products sold in the state to find the level of trans fat.

The FSSAI has given strict direction to every state to bring down the Trans fatty acids content in edible oils and vanaspati to 2 per cent from the current 5 per cent in the state.

"Finding out the level of trans fats is very necessary. FSSAI officials have come down to the state to collect samples. The state food safety authorities had collected samples of around 150 food products in the state for checking the trans fat levels. Many of the products exceeded the trans fat levels given on the product label," said the official.

Vital Strategies, a New York-based global health organisation, has given training for the food safety officers here for collecting trans fat samples. "Several samples were collected from food chains including Chicking, KFC, and packet foods including cookies. But we don't have an accredited lab facility for taking legal action against violators," said the official.