

Kerala's action plan against trans fat within this week

According to Health Department authorities, the state will come out with an action-plan to combat the scourge of trans fat within this week.

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By Dileep V Kumar

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: According to Health Department authorities, the state will come out with an

. A state-level committee formed for the task will also come out with a blueprint for setting up adequate infrastructure to analyse trans fat content in food items in the three state-run analytical food testing labs.

“The draft action-plan has been prepared. The state-level committee will now examine the same. It is expected that by this week we could finalize the same and roll out the campaign against trans fat,” said Dr Bipin Gopal, state nodal officer for non-communicable diseases.

Gopal said that the fight against trans fat in the state will be of a three-pronged strategy. In the first phase, a random sampling of food items for testing trans fat will be carried out in selected districts it will be followed by a meeting of stakeholders in which the findings of the sampling will be briefed to them and alternatives for trans fat will also be proposed. The enforcement comes in the last phase.

According to him, in a meeting convened with representatives of bakery association, pickle manufacturing association, catering association and hoteliers and restaurant association in the last week of January were sensitized about the ill effects of trans fat and to avoid the same.

Meanwhile, it is learnt that the Community Medicine Department of the Thiruvananthapuram Government Medical College (GMC) has begun a multi-pronged study on trans fat. The study aims to find the content of trans fatty acids, salt and sugar in snack foods, baked foods, and fried foods.

“The study is part of a nation-wide study mooted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) against trans fat. In south India, the Bangalore Medical College and Thiruvananthapuram GMC were the centres. The study will take time to complete,” said Dr P S Indu of Community Medicine Department GMC. It was following a finding that increased trans fatty acid consumption leads to adverse health impact, particularly

cardiovascular diseases that the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India decided to spearhead a campaign that could bring down the trans-fatty acid content in edible oils and vanaspati to two per cent from the current 5% by 2022.

According to WHO, trans fat intake leads to more than 5lakh deaths due to cardiovascular disease and it proposes the REPLACE strategy to eliminate industrially-produced trans-fatty acids from the global food supply.

Garnering global support

The fight against trans fat in the state is bolstered by the support of the World Bank (WB), World Health Organization (WHO), and Vital Strategies- a US-based NGO.