

## FSSAI to do away with trans fats, to align with WHO goals by 2023

Civil society representatives and consumer activists have favored the policy amendment as a notable milestone towards aligning Indian's regulation of 'trans fats' with World Health Organisation's (WHO) call for global elimination of industrially-produced trans fats by 2023.

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The proposed amendment will go a long way in regulating trans fats.

TAKING a big step towards improving diet and health outcomes of Indians, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), has proposed amendments to 'Food Products Standards and Food Additive Regulations, 2011', for the purpose of limiting trans-fatty acids in all oils and fats to not more than 3 per cent by January, 2021 and to not more than 2 per cent by January, 2022.

Civil society representatives and consumer activists have favored the policy amendment as a notable milestone towards aligning Indian's regulation of 'trans fats' with World Health Organisation's (WHO) call for global elimination of industrially-produced trans fats by 2023. Opinder Preet Kaur, president of Generation Savior Association, an NGO, working for better health of youth in Punjab, told Newsline, "We are planing to work on two verticals, one being policy and the other is its implementation. The people of Punjab need to change their cooking habits. The biggest challenge is to reach out to the rural people and educate them about the side-effects of trans fats."

She further added that the regulation is particularly important for Punjab, as it is one of the three states with highest prevalence of cardiovascular diseases. The proposed amendment will go a long way in regulating trans fats. She added that several countries have eliminated industrially-reproduced trans fats from food supply through robust implementation of related laws. Policies to eliminate trans fats have been shown to work. For instance, ban on trans fats in restaurants of New York City showed both reduced serum concentrations of trans fats and reduced hospitalisations from heart diseases.

Dr Anjali Borhade, Director, Disha Foundation, told Newsline, "The reduction in limit of trans-fatty acids in all oils will have a significant impact on health of people living in Punjab.

The government has done its bit, now it is our duty to strengthen it and educate people about consequences of trans fats.”

She further added that India has taken a timely steps towards achieving WHO-set goal of zero trans fats by 2023. It is now important that these laws are enforced across the country. She said civil societies must work in a tandem with FSSAI and state-level food authorities to ensure that the industry complies with proposed regulation.

Nikhil Tandon, Head of Department of Endocrinology and Metabolism at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, said, “It is heartening to note that the FSSAI, Government of India, has taken necessary regulatory steps towards achieving WHO goal of zero trans fats by 2023. A concerted effort is required from all stakeholders to ensure that the regulatory efforts transition to action at earliest.”