Food wrapped in newspapers a deadly cocktail of chemicals

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What FSSAI's new regulation says
- The new regulation of the FSSAI prohibits the use of newspaper and recycled plastic for wrapping, storing, transporting or dispensing food items and products. This new regulation will come into force from July 1.

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Eating out may prove to be costly in terms of health if you happen to consume the food that is wrapped in old newspapers. Printing ink contains harmful pigments, additives and toxic chemicals.

Some eateries serve hot, oil-dripping puri/ chana on old newspapers that are used as plates. Bhel-puri, kulcha-chana are wrapped and packed in newspapers. In small hotels, newspapers serve as kitchen napkins and are used as absorbents. This is despite the warnings by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) about the 'slow-poisoning' by cancer-causing agents lurking in newspaper ink.

According to the FSSAI, the presence of chemical contaminants and pathogenic micro-organisms in used newspaper pose potential risk to human health. The sick and the elderly and also the people with compromised immune systems are at a greater risk of developing health complications, if exposed to food packed in such material.

Consumers, meanwhile, continue to be blissfully unaware that they are consuming a deadly cocktail of chemicals and additives along with the food they eat with relish.

"On Sundays, we go out for eating. Usually, we prefer puri-chana that is freshly prepared. The eating joint we visit uses newspaper as plate to serve the puri-chana. Even in case of

sandwiches, newspaper is used as packaging material," said Achla, a city resident. She said she and her family were not aware that the practice of using newspaper as packaging material was harmful.

"We did not know that newspaper ink, if consumed through food, is carcinogenic. In fact, at home also, we use newspapers to pack oily food, little realising that it could be a health hazard," she said.