

## Curbs sought on advertising of junk food near schools

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Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is looking to put curbs on advertisement or promotion of unhealthy food not only inside school premises but also in the vicinity of schools.

With such a move, the regulator aims to promote wholesome and nutritious food and restrict the consumption of high sugar, salt and fat products in and around school premises where children are without parental supervision. This is part of the draft Food Safety and Standards (Safe and Wholesome Food for School Children) Regulations.

Speaking at an Assocham event, Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, said the food safety regulator has proposed to impose curbs on advertising, promotion and endorsement of unhealthy food products in school premises as well as within 50-metre radius of school surroundings.

The regulator first began looking at this issue in 2015, after Delhi High Court had directed it to come out with regulations to promote healthy food for school children. In that year, it had also released draft guidelines on this issue.

The food safety authority aims to define healthy diets based on certain metrics. “How do you define healthy diet? That is at the heart of that regulation. Therefore we have to have a matrix that defines healthy food fairly and objectively,” he stated.

In the draft guidelines released earlier, the regulator had identified chips, sugar-sweetened carbonated and non-carbonated beverages, samosa, French fries, pizzas among others as HFSS foods.

Under the aegis of a self-regulatory global alliance, several key international packaged food companies already voluntary do not advertise their food products to children below the age of 12 years and in primary schools.