

Press Release

National Low Salt Cooking Challenge: A step towards Healthy Eating Practices

New Delhi, March 17, 2021: In alignment with this year's theme 'More Flavour, Less Salt' announced by WASHH (World Action on Salt, Sugar and Health) during the World Salt Awareness Week from March 08th to 14th, FSSAI commenced the National Low Salt Cooking Challenge (NLSCC) to engage and sensitize citizens to reduce amount of salt in home cooked foods.

Organised under the ambit of Eat Right India movement, this challenge is one of its kind virtual cooking competition to increase awareness among people on the importance and ways to cook commonly consumed foods using less amount of salt. This challenge received entries from various teams consisting of nutrition and culinary community to present regional nutritious meals using less amount of salt without compromising the taste and flavor in food preparations.

More than 200 participants competed in teams of four or two across different regions. Amongst eligible teams, 16 teams prepared recipes from Northern India; 15 from Southern India; 14 from Western India; 6 from Central India; 5 from North Eastern and 4 from Eastern Region States. The winning team "Na-Namak" presented a **Maharashtrian Thali** followed by a **Thali from Vidharbha Region** and a **Punjabi Thali** by the 1st runner up "Varhadi Tadka" and 11nd runner-up "NIPS Team 3" respectively. The teams used different approaches to reduce amount of salt in the preparation of recipes.

Salt is an essential ingredient for both food and health. However, excess consumption of salt leads to increased chances of high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease and stroke. The World Health Organization recommends < 5 grams of salt intake in a day. One common method used by all the participants involved combining unsalted food with salted foods, resulting in salt reduction in the overall meals. Other approaches included usage of herbs and spices such as onion powder, garlic powder, lemon, celery seeds, tamarind powder, ginger powder, raw mango, etc. that increased the flavor of foods with lower amount of salt.

CEO FSSAI, Shri Arun Singhal congratulated all the participants and highlighted that though it is just a competition to reduce amount of salt in daily meals and everyone aspires to win the competition, the objective is not just winning the prize, but imbibe the thought of salt reduction in our day to day eating practices. While everyone should think of reducing the amount of salt gradually, it is equally important to increase awareness among your families, friends and relatives".

“Salt reduction is a conditioning and training of the tongue which can be achieved successfully by creativity and innovation in using our Indian Heritage like herbs, condiments and spices in food preparations. Let’s experiment through this low salt cooking challenge to get closer to natural flavours of the food and get a bonus of keeping hypertension and heart disease away.”, said Dr Jagmeet Madan, Member, NeTProFaN and National President, Indian Dietetic Association (IDA).

The National Low Salt Cooking Challenge is an initiative under the Eat Right India movement and can be visited at <https://eatrightindia.gov.in/hfss/nlsc/>. The website contains useful resources and practical guide on simple ways for salt reduction in our diets. The challenge can also be followed at various social media platforms of FSSAI and with hashtags #LowSaltCookingChallenge #EatRightWithLowSalt #EveryGrainCounts #AskForLowSalt.

For media queries, contact:

*Ruchika Sharma
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
E: sharmaruchika.21@gmail.com*