

Press Release

‘The Eat Right Movement’ Launched: A Leap Forward to Combat Negative Nutritional trends to Fight Lifestyle Diseases

New Delhi, 10th July 2018: In an unprecedented show of solidarity to improve public health in India and combat negative nutritional trends to fight lifestyle diseases, the food industry, public health professionals, civil society and consumer organizations, influencers and celebrities came together on a common platform today and pledged to take concrete steps to create ‘The Eat Right Movement’ in the country.

‘The Eat Right Movement’, built on two broad pillars of ‘Eat Healthy’ and ‘Eat Safe’, aims to engage, excite and enable citizens to improve their health and wellbeing. This movement could not have come at a better time, with Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) accounting for 1 in 5 disease-related deaths, widespread anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies on the rise and India becoming the diabetes capital of the world.

Led by FSSAI, the strength of the ‘The Eat Right Movement’ lies in its holistic and collaborative approach, with stakeholders on both the demand and supply-side joining to make a difference through some clearly identified steps. On the demand side, the Eat Right Movement focuses on empowering citizens to make the right food choices. On the supply side, it nudges food businesses to reformulate their products, provide better nutritional information to consumers and make investments in healthy food as responsible food businesses.

The growing consensus amongst industry members on the importance of promoting ‘eating right’ was evidenced by the commitments made by companies across the food chain. While the edible oil industry, bakeries and ‘halwais’ committed to phase out trans-fats by 2022 [India@75 - Freedom from trans-fats by 2022], major food companies pledged to reformulate packaged foods to reduce the level of salt, sugar and saturated fat. The food services sector promised to provide healthier food options and introduce menu-labelling, even as major food retail players including e-commerce players agreed to promote healthier food options and responsible retail practices.

‘The Eat Right Movement’ brings together three ongoing initiatives of FSSAI: the Safe and Nutritious Food Initiative, focused on social and behavioural change around food safety and nutrition at home, school, workplace and on-the-go; the Eat Healthy Campaign, focused on reduction of high fat, sugar and salt foods in the diet; and Food Fortification, focused on promoting five staple foods-wheat flour, rice, oil, milk and salt that are added with key vitamins and minerals to improve their nutritional content.

The highlight of the movement is the rich, credible and high-quality resources launched today to sustain the movement. ‘The Eat Right Movement’ Website is an interface between food safety and nutrition experts and citizens. It provides credible and authentic nutrition information including health tips by experts, nutritious recipes, and exciting tools to get a peek into one’s nutritional needs, body indices, learning about nutrition labels, and other resources. Professional associations like the Nutrition Society of India (NSI), Indian Dietetics Association

(IDA), Association of Food Scientists and Technologists (India) and Indian Medical Association(IMA), Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) and individuals have committed to support this platform. An AI Powered Chatbot for citizens to answer all questions related to food is part of the website.

The Eat Right Toolkit to reach out to people at the grass roots level includes a training manual for frontline health workers such as Health and Wellness Centre workers, ASHA and Anganwadi workers etc and engagement material for citizens in rural and aspirational areas, with a special focus on children. Resource books on safe and nutritious food such as the Pink Book for homes, The Yellow Book for schools, The Orange Book for workplaces, The Purple Books for eating out, vetted by domain experts are also in place.

To kick start and popularize the movement, a powerful infotainment campaign through a short video starring National Award winning actor Sh. RajKummar Rao (who consented to participate in the campaign pro-bono) is also launched today that encourages citizens to reduce salt, sugar and fat on mass media and social media, and has the potential to go viral with its simple message - '*Aaj Se, Thoda Kam*'. Sh. Rao, as the main face of the campaign officially launched the 'The Eat Right Movement' in Mumbai and offered his support to spread the message of '*#Aaj Se Thoda Kam*' across possible formats.

Dissemination of all engagement material, including training modules is through various partners that include Central and State Government Departments, Civil Society Organizations, Industry and Professional Associations, NGOs, national and international agencies, academia and corporates through CSR initiatives.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Guest, Professor VijayaRaghavan, Principal Scientific Advisor GOI, added that we need to complement reduction of salt, sugar, fat with lifestyle changes such as eating a more plant-based, natural diet, which celebrity chefs can demonstrate in practice. The industry is a big player in supporting this movement therefore synergy between government, civil society and the industry is critical to its success.

Padmashri Chef Sanjeev Kapoor committed to supporting this movement by promoting healthy food on his channel with 80-million viewers.

Dr. Balram Bhargav, DG, ICMR pointed out that non-communicable diseases are rampant in India and this movement along with 'Thoda Kam' gesture is a brilliant idea to drive home the message and urged mobilizing street food vendors for this movement as well.

Dr. Arabinda Mitra, Scientific Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, mentioned that the formative years of life are critical for inculcating healthy food habits, therefore schools must be targeted with curricular changes to incorporate these messages.

Ms. Suneeta Narain, DG, Centre for Science and Environment, urged the industry to move ahead on their pledges as fast as possible.

CEO FSSAI Pawan Agarwal remarked that "The Eat Right Movement" can grow organically as a self-perpetuating movement, which is co-owned and co-led by various partners using the broad framework and resources put together by professionals and experts in the field of food and nutrition.

Chairperson, FSSAI, Shri Ashish Bahuguna noted that these voluntary nutrition commitments are a giant leap forward to combat negative nutrition trends in society and along with social and

behavioural changes for positive nutrition in citizens, this would help us to reduce the burden of non-communicable disease in the country.

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