

Restaurants to list calorie count

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Hotels, restaurants and food joints will have to display gluten status in food.

Imagine the menu card at your favourite restaurant informing you about the calorie value of each of the items besides their prices.

This is what the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India plans to mandate as it brings out a proposal, outlining a new rule to help customers choose wisely while eating out.

The draft rule, released two days ago, comes with India reporting the world's second highest number of obese children and doubling of the number of obese adults in the last decade.

"Food Service Establishments having central licence or outlets at 10 or more locations shall display the calorific value of each of the food items sold by them on their menu cards or boards. Additionally, reference information on the requirements of 2,000 Kcal energy for an average adult per day shall also be displayed clearly and prominently," says the draft rule.

In addition, hotels, restaurants and food joints would also have to display (1) gluten status in food (2) information relating to statutory declarations (like having too much of salt and sugar is bad for health) (3) information on allergens in food (4) logo for vegetarian and non-vegetarian food and (5) information on organic food or ingredients.

The food regulator in the past approached the restaurants to come out with the calorie count on their menu cards voluntarily, but met with resistance from a section of them, sources told *DH*. Moving ahead, FSSAI now proposed a regulation which hotels, restaurants and fast food joints would have to follow.

At the moment, it's a draft proposal on which the FSSAI sought public comments in the next 30 days. Once the comments are received, those would be analysed and incorporated, if required, in the final notification.