

Dual burden of obesity, malnutrition can be tackled through healthy diet: Dr Harsh Vardhan

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New Delhi , Dec 26 : With India suffering from the double burden of obesity and malnutrition, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan on Thursday stressed the need for the right kind of diet, which will help to reduce the disease burden in the country.

Addressing the second edition of the 'Eat Right Mela' at the Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium here, Dr Vardhan said "India, on one side, is suffering from under-nourishment resulting in infirmities such as wasting and stunting."

"On the other, there is another critical area of concern to be addressed, that is, obesity, which is apparently the result of excessive consumption of junk food, wrong choices of food, overeating and lack of exercise," added Dr Vardhan.

This year's theme is -- Healthier Diets for the national Eat Right Mela, being held from December 26 to December 29 at the Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium in the city. Presently, the rise of diet-related diseases suggests that the people are eating less healthy food than they were eating a decade ago, he said. According to the book -- Transforming Food System for Rising India, India has an acute burden of malnutrition. It has stated that the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS) estimates show that around 30 per cent were too thin for their age and gender (underweight) 5 and 38 per cent of all children under the ages of five were too short for their age and gender (stunted). As per the Global Hunger Index -- 2014, India ranks 103rd out of the world's 119th hungriest countries. In this context, the movement of 'Eat Right India' started by FSSAI is a timely initiative to aware the people about right eating habits, said the minister.

The Union Minister also launched -- The PURPLE Book, a handbook on diets for diseases. The book provides general guidelines for hospitals on suitable diets for common medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, cancer, gut disorders and so on in a simple format and has been developed and vetted by experts in the field of food and nutrition. This book is available for free download on www.fssai.gov.in.

FSSAI has identified eight nodal institutions, which would develop a 'Ready Reckoner' that will have an inventory of all research work, experts and institutions and would carry out and facilitate research, survey and related activities.