

Food safety dept to launch drive to allay people's dining-out fears

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Is it safe to dine out?

With eateries in all but three districts set to resume dine-in service from Tuesday, a section of people may be wondering the same. To alleviate their worries and to ensure the eateries do not become the hotspot of Covid-19 transmission, the Food Safety Department is gearing up to launch a massive campaign across the state.

“People may have doubts about dining out in hotels and restaurants. It is to alleviate such safety concerns that the Union Health Ministry issued a separate standard operating procedure (SOP) for restaurants, hotels and other hospitality units,” said Sabu PC, administrative officer, Commissionerate of Food Safety.

“Besides, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on Sunday released food hygiene and safety guidelines for the establishments. The guidelines will be widely circulated among people,” he said. As per FSSAI’s norms, an eatery’s high-touch points, washrooms, food preparation/production area, stores, packaging area, service area, waste disposal area and others will be cleaned thoroughly and sanitised daily.

Meanwhile, office-bearers of Kerala Hotel and Restaurant Association (KHRA) said takeaway system will continue in Malappuram, Kozhikode and Kannur owing to safety concerns. “Eateries in other districts will offer dine-in from Tuesday,” said KHRA general

secretary G Jayapal.He, however, said several stipulations, like physical distancing, thermal screening provision and separate entry and exit points, mentioned in the SOP were impractical and small-scale eateries will find it difficult to implement them.