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Officials to encourage safe food on school campuses

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Madurai: After the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India released draft regulations banning sales and supply of unhealthy food on school campuses, the authorities concerned here are planning a sensitisation on the proposed regulation for schoolteachers and their heads here.

The draft regulations titled Food Safety and Standards (Safe food and healthy diets for schoolchildren) Regulations, 2019 has proposed to ban sales food contains high salt, sugar and fat on school campuses. The same cannot be displayed or sold in 50 metres radius of campuses. It has proposed mandatory license to sell or supply food items by school management or a food business operator on campus, the officials said.

The proposed regulation encourages schools to adopt a comprehensive programme for promoting safe food and healthy diets among schoolchildren and to convert school campuses into 'Eat Right School', focusing on safe and healthy food, the officials said.

Dr M Somasundaram, designated officer for food safety, Madurai, told TOI that his team would conduct meeting with teachers and headmasters on Mondays, and shopkeepers and traders on Tuesdays to sensitise them . The teachers will also be sensitised on healthy and locally available food, so that they can promote them among students.

"Teachers will in turn sensitise children by conducting sessions periodically. Teachers have been chosen since it would be a daunting task to each and every students throughout the district. Through the students the teachers can also drive messages to their family members as well," he said.

The faculty members will check for unhealthy foods being sold in the vicinity and advise the shopkeepers not to sell them. Food safety officials will take action if they receive complaint from teachers against shopkeepers who fail to adhere to the regulations, Somasundaram

said. To reach out to traders, the food safety officials are forming councils involving trader representatives. They are planning to form eight councils in the district and have already formed four in Vadipatti, Alanganallur, Usilampatti and the city.

“The council members will inform fellow people. There is a great difficulty in reaching out to shopkeepers and traders on emerging regulations and good practices. The formation of council would solve the issue,” he said.