

TFA ill-effects: Cut down on Vanaspati, bakery items

Keep a check on Vanaspati and bakery items

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Hyderabad: Food regulatory authorities have launched concerted efforts to make people aware of the ill-effects of trans-fatty acids (TFA) and also reduce their availability in the food items that are consumed by general public on a daily basis. As part of this initiative, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has in principle decided to bring down the trans-fatty acids (TFA), which are commonly available in Vanaspati, bakery items and margarine, a form of butter, by at least two per cent in a phase manner.

According to FSSAI, the reduction of TFA by at least two per cent would effectively bring the level of TFA to zero level in food in India. Many countries around the world such as Denmark, Chile Norway, Singapore South Africa and Ecuador have already limited TFA in all foods by 2 per cent.

How harmful is TFA?

Trans fats are major concern for various diseases such as cardiovascular diseases. The TFA is not natural and is prepared through an industrial process known as hydrogenation, which in simple terms is hardening or solidifying vegetable oils. TFA also occurs naturally, but at very lower quantities in meat and dairy products from cattle, sheep, goats, and camels. Doctors and researchers have also found that Vanaspati or TFA causes a rise in LDL Cholesterol levels (Bad cholesterol) and lowers good Cholesterol (HDL). It also increases risk of developing heart disease and stroke and is associated with a higher risk of causing type 2 Diabetes.

How much TFA is safe?

According to Hyderabad-based National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), the daily intake of TFA should not exceed 1 per cent of energy intake. Teh FSSAI says that food products, in which edible oils and fats are used as an ingredient, shall not contain trans fatty acids more than 2 per cent by weight of the total oils or fats present in the product from January, 2022.