



Chapter 8

Catching Them Young!

Are you concerned about what your child is eating and drinking every day? Join the Eat Right School Program! Everyone is worried about the kind of food our children are eating these days but we don't know what to do about it. Here, the catchphrase, 'catch them young' can provide the answer.

Eating habits formed in the formative years stick and stay on till adulthood making it imperative

to teach young children good food habits early on. Ideally, the process must begin as early as possible to ensure that they will make and keep right eating habits for a lifetime. That said, catching the attention of a captive audience (in schools) to educate and teach them the rules of right eating at any age is a wonderful start. And this is where the '**Eat Right School**' initiative

The Good Work!

Realizing how susceptible students are to wrong eating influences due to their lack of awareness, and also taking into account the fact that at a young age they are open to experimenting with food, FSSAI, under the Eat Right School vision has been working extensively to create awareness about 'Eating Healthy', 'Eating Safe', and 'Eating Sustainable' among school children, and through them, among the community at large.

The Eat Right School Program

The Eat Right School program, launched by FSSAI in September 2016, promotes a culture of food safety and nutrition. It is based on the Eat Right Matrix and is run through the school's health and wellness ambassadors and teams. Close to 35,527 schools across the country have already been registered under the Eat Right School program till 5th October 2020.

The **tools** used for the program are:



The Yellow Book - an attractive manual with age-appropriate content with simple messages and activities to be carried out within school and at home to reinforce the importance of food safety and nutrition.

It has been translated into English, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu already.



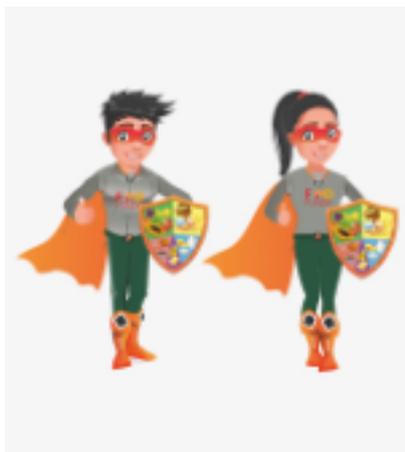
Activity Book - A fun-filled activity book has been designed to teach and reinforce the message of safe and nutritious food.



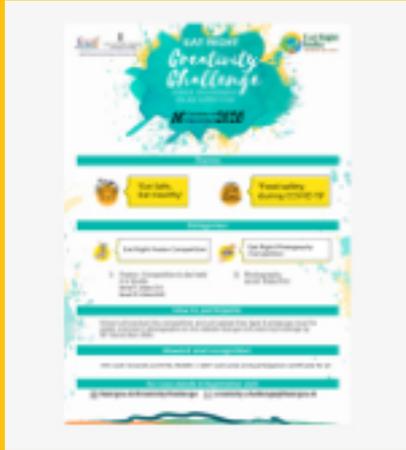
Magic Box - The Food Safety Magic Box comprises 102 simple tests to check food adulteration along with Magic Box Companion Guidebook designed to provide right information for schools and homes.



Food Safety Guidebook for Teachers- To further facilitate the usage of Food Safety Magic Box, grade-wise lesson plan booklets have been developed for the teachers. The lesson plan booklets are available from grades 3-10. Each grade booklet contains 12-15 tests, which are mapped across the curriculum of the particular grade.



Mascots: 'Miss Sehat' and 'Master Sehat', which children can relate to have been used extensively in the training content and a mascot activation program in malls, schools and other public places is on the anvil. Master and Miss Sehat engage and educate children to promote social and behavioural change around food safety, hygiene and healthy diets in a fun, educative manner and are a huge hit.



Eat Right Creativity Challenge: Pan India competitions 'On the spot Poster', 'Paint a Wall', and 'Digital Creative' on the 'Eat Right' theme is organised to engage schools and young people.

The Regulatory Framework

FSSAI has passed a Regulation, Food Safety and Standards (Safe Food and balanced diets for children in School) Regulations, 2020. The regulation prohibits,

- 1 The sale of food products high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium in school premises or campus.
- 2 The Food Business Operators (FBOs) to advertise, market or sell or offer for sale including free sale food products high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium in school campus or to school children in an area within fifty meters from the school gate in any direction.
- 3 Any advertisement banner or wallpaper of food, which is high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium on school computers.

Additionally, the regulation makes it mandatory to FBOs supplying prepared meals in the premises to follow general guidance provided in the regulation and direction issued by the Food Authority or the State Food Commissioners.



In addition, FSSAI has developed a regulatory framework to enable the schools to promote safe and wholesome food in schools via:

- ★Mandatory registration of school canteen/hostel mess
- ★Training modules for school canteen and mess staff
- ★Guidance for sale and nutritious food in Mid-Day meal

FSSAI also works with the school to create awareness for parents and community through seminars, workshops and training programs for parents on Eat Right and conducts activities for creating mass awareness on food safety, hygiene, nutrition and to curb waste.

Well, teaching children to eat well can be tricky. The idea is not to overwhelm them with too many facts that they can't grasp or turn every information section into a lecture. But it is important not to wait too long as then they could pick up unhealthy habits that become difficult to shake off later. They need to know that every food they put into their bodies affects them. And schools can get that message across by talking with them about the food they put in their bodies, why it matters, and how they can learn to make the healthiest choices. FSSAI has stepped in here in a very effective way to help guide the schools to do this process effectively.



What the schools can do...

Schools can encourage healthy eating habits by:

Incorporating healthy eating and physical activity across the curriculum in fun and creative ways.

Offering healthy foods in school canteens

Creating partnerships with the broader community, for example, local food growers, sporting clubs, library etc.

Providing parents with information on healthy food choices and active living.

Providing professional development opportunities for teachers and other support staff to teach and promote healthy eating and being active.

Creating and developing a school vegetable garden.

Involving pupils and parents in making school food policy.

Promoting snack breaks for students to eat fruit and vegetables.

