Guidelines for Reduction of Trans Fatty Acids

The Health Department and the Food Safety wing have launched an initiative to enforce dietary guidelines, involving the reduction of trans fatty acids (TFAs), salt and sugar in commercially available foods in **Kerala.**

- The initiative is being launched with technical support from the **World Bank, WHO and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**. Unhealthy diet is pushing up **Metabolic Syndrome (MS)** and premature deaths due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among Keralites.
- **Metabolic syndrome (MS)** is a cluster of metabolic abnormalities — high blood pressure, high blood sugar, abdominal obesity, abnormal cholesterol or triglyceride levels — that occur together, raising risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.
- Earlier, **Kerala also announced a 14.5% "fat tax"** on pizzas, burgers, sandwiches and tacos sold through branded outlets, in sync with the World Health Organization's advocacy of using fiscal tools to promote healthy eating.
- WHO recommends that trans fat intake be limited to less than 1% of total energy intake and has called for the total elimination of TFAs in global food supply by 2023.

Trans-fats

- There are **two types of trans-fats** found in foods- naturally occurring and artificial trans-fats.
- **Naturally occurring** trans-fats are produced in the gut of some animals and foods made from these animals may contain small quantities of these fats.
- Artificial trans-fats on the other hand are **created by the process hydrogenation,** which is an industrial process that adds hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid at room temperature.
- The primary dietary source of trans-fats in processed foods is **partially hydrogenated oils**. Trans-fats are easy to use, inexpensive to produce and last a long time. They help give foods a desirable taste and texture.
- Some of the most basic and most consumed foods that we generally eat almost on a daily basis may include- cakes, pies, cookies, biscuits, margarine, cream-filled candies, fried fast foods, doughnuts, etc.

- **REPLACE, which is an acronym for Review, Promote, Legislate, Assess, Create and Enforce, is the first global initiative** to eliminate a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. It is a World Health Organisation (WHO) six step Action Package and guide to global elimination of trans fat.
- Denmark was the first country to ban trans fat in 2003 and in three years, their Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) mortality rates plummeted.
- As part of the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals, the global community has committed to **reducing premature death from noncommunicable diseases by one-third by 2030 (Goal 3).** Global elimination of industrially-produced trans fats will help achieve this goal.
- Given India's disease burden of non-communicable diseases and also the urban movement towards healthier foods, this movement is vital for the country to prevent diseases, and the compromised quality of life and deaths caused due to transfats.
- Fortunately, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has indicated it's

commitment to eliminating industrially produced transfat by 2022 in advance of the WHO target date of 2023.
- **In 2017,** India implemented a **mandatory limit of 5% trans fat content in fats/oils only.**

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been established under **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006** which consolidates various acts & orders that have hitherto handled food related issues in various Ministries and Departments.
- **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India** is the Administrative Ministry for the implementation of FSSAI. The Chairperson is in the rank of Secretary to Government of India.
- FSSAI has been created for laying down science-based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

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