

FSSAI directs stakeholders to discontinue the use of newspaper for packaging or serving food products

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In a recent incident where it was noticed that newspaper was being used to pack and serve food by a famous Vadapav Vendor, a joint action had been concluded by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, West Region (FSSAI, WR) and Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM). Taking into consideration the possibility of occurrence of similar incidences across the city and region, FSSAI, WR urges the food vendors to discontinue the use of newspapers for packing and serving food or any other food contact material in related manner.

It is important to note that printing inks contain multiple harmful colours, pigments, binders and chemicals, specifically containing lead and other heavy metals which can leach into food items, leading to serious chronic health issues. During their distribution and handling, newspapers are often exposed to unsanitary conditions, making them carriers for pathogens that may cause foodborne illnesses.

Food Safety and Standards (Packaging) Regulations, 2018, strictly prohibits the use of newspaper or any such material for food storing and wrapping of food. An advisory in this regard has also been issued earlier. Thus, small and medium food businesses, including street food vendors, restaurants, cloud kitchens, caterers, Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs), food vending establishments, petty retailers, mobile food vendors, hawkers, etc., shall not use newspapers at any point during the processing and sale of any food item, including to absorb excess oil, cover food ingredients or food items, wrapping food items etc. Accordingly, FSSAI re-iterates the above directions in the interest of consumer well-being and adopt only safe and approved food-grade packaging materials for use in the sale and distribution of food by them. Consumers are also urged to stay alert in this regard.

FSSAI and State Authorities are working closely to monitor and enforce the provisions under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, Rules and Regulations made thereunder. FSSAI is also actively working towards encouraging the use of safe and sustainable packaging in Food & Beverage sector, reinforcing the Government's commitment to food and environment safety as well as building food safety awareness among consumers.

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