



## THE TIMES OF INDIA

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### Pizzas, burgers may soon be booted out of school canteens



Pizzas, burgers and aerated drinks may soon be out of the palate of school canteens. In order to restrict consumption of junk food by children, the food safety regulator is preparing a negative list of products that are high on salt, sugar and fat to prevent their availability in schools and their vicinity.

"The list will have those food items which are known to have negative impact on health if consumed regularly and not desirable for young people," Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) chief executive Pawan Kumar Agarwal said. The list is expected to include products like chips, pizzas, burgers, ready-to-eat noodles, sugar-sweetened carbonated and non-carbonated drinks, potato fries and confectionery items.

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The move comes in the wake of rising burden of diabetes and obesity among children and youngsters. In October, the food regulator had also issued draft guidelines on wholesome and nutritious food availability in schools to control junk food consumption among children in India. The draft guidelines suggest restricting sale or availability of food items high in fat, salt or sugar within 50 metres of a school's premises.

The number of diabetics in India has doubled from 32 million in 2000 to 63 million in 2013. It is projected to increase to 101.2 million in the next 15 years. Globally, at least 41 million children under five years were estimated to be obese or overweight in 2014.

While the prevalence rate of obesity in this age group is still low in India at less than 5%, public health agencies have cautioned that the trend is fast catching up in low- and middle-income countries with companies targeting market space in developing countries like India.

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