

Chemical-based and artificial additives are toxic in nature



The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has laid down new norms for packaged and processed food manufacturers regarding limited use of new chemicals and additives of varied nature in order to increase the shelf life and cosmetic value of food. These chemicals and additives include preservatives, artificial colours, stabilisers, antioxidants, artificial sweeteners and flavouring agents. Some of these artificial and chemical-based additives are toxic in nature and may be harmful if consumed over a period of time and that too beyond a certain limit.

The FSSAI has made it mandatory to follow the standards set for these packaged food articles, which is also printed on the package. Consumers should read the ingredients printed on them. For example, if soft drinks are consumed over a period of time or excessively, they can act as carcinogens. This is due to the high levels of pesticides present in the drinks. I agree that the trend of consuming packaged and processed food products has increased in India, especially among the working class. But, cooking healthy and traditional food at home is any day a better option.

DR ABHAY DESAI, FOOD MICROBIOLOGIST & DIRECTOR, FOOD HYGIENE AND HEALTH LABORATORY

The oil used in preparing junk food is a by-product of petroleum



Nowadays, the number of people suffering from renal failure has increased. This is happening due to the possible increase in consumption of chemical additives through packaged and processed food. Youngsters too are suffering from renal failure. Also, over consumption of chemicals present in these packaged food products have an adverse effect on the kidneys. The percentage of infertility has also increased from 15% to 50% over a period of ten years.

People must give a thought to their eating habits and return to the traditional habits of cooking food at home as it is surely a healthy option. Healthy cooking at home will surely keep you fit and help lead an active life. Especially working and educated people must understand the grave health dangers they face by over consumption of these packaged and processed food products.

For example, the oil used in preparing junk food is not from a natural source but the by-product of petroleum. The sweeteners used in the packaged food products are saccharin and not sugar. Over a long period of time, the body will not be able to metabolise all these artificial chemicals. There are so many natural foods available in our country and dishes made from them are also available in many hotels.

DR BABU JOSEPH, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NATUROPATHY

Quick fix food could cost you your health

As per a new survey by Assocham, 82% workforce in metro cities prefers to eat packaged food. But these food items are laden with chemicals and additives which could gravely affect the health. These items are also high on salt, leading to high blood pressure and trans fats which increase the bad cholesterol and reduce the good ones.

Speak Up throws light on the matter



\$15 billion
The current worth of the packaged food industry

\$30 billion
The mark it is expected to touch by 2015

15-20%
Rate at which it is growing annually

ALARMING TREND

According to a new survey by Association of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham), 82% of working-class from metro cities prefers to eat packaged food rather than eating outside

The survey was conducted in 2,000 households of Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore and

other tier A cities

It revealed that ready-to-eat food is preferred by nuclear families, where both husband and wife are working professionals and people who do not have the time to cook at home

The main categories of packaged food are bakery

products, canned/dried processed food, frozen processed food, ready-to-eat meals, dairy products, diet snacks, processed meat and health products and drinks

The report said urban areas contribute to almost 72% sale of such products, with the North and West responsible for 2/3 of the sale

Nutritional value of food gets compromised due to processing



Any sort of food processing done means altering the composition of the food items, which invariably changes the nutritional value and increases the shelf life of the product. This essentially means addition of preservatives, storing food in high or low temperatures, alterations in the basic ingredients or increasing certain ingredients like salt or sugar. The methods of processing and using additives succeed in maintaining the product aesthetically but definitely compromises on the nutrients. Especially heat sensitive nutrients like Vitamin C are lost due to processing. There are alterations in the structure of certain nutrients like proteins, fat and carbohydrates, thus reducing its bio-availability (absorption in the body) due to processing. These food items definitely fill our stomachs but affect the health. This leads to diseases like obesity, heart problems, lethargy, acidity, blood pressure and many more such ailments. There is an increase in consumption of 'health foods' and if the labels are not interpreted correctly then they can often be misleading and we end up consuming unhealthy food.

AVANTI DESHPANDE, NUTRITIONIST

Eating dal-chawal is a far healthier option over junk food



A large number of people are consuming packaged food because it has become a matter of convenience, pleases the taste buds and fills your stomach. Also, it is important to note the quality of packaging used for these products and whether additives are used or not to increase their shelf life. For example, dairy products like milk that come in tetra packs come without any additives and due to no contact with air, it remains fresh for a long period of time. The ready-to-eat food products are especially laden with preservatives and can have excess oil in the form of trans fats, which can be a threat to health. I don't really advocate bakery products, whether they are packaged or not. The problem with canned or processed food is that they have excessive salt or sugar. Cooking at home is always a healthy option. For example, even simply eating dal-chawal is a far healthier option over junk food. What one needs to do is a little bit of time management and planning. We should stick to those food items that we are genetically used to such as Indian food cooked by traditional methods.

GEETA DESAI, DIET CONSULTANT

Why allow sale of packaged food when it is harmful to health?

Consuming packaged food is a matter of convenience for a person who has a busy routine. People look at packaged food as a safer option than openly available food items that are prepared outside. Many people are not aware about what goes into making processed and packaged food items. Besides, the ingredients that are printed on the packaged food are in finer text so no one generally reads it. Even if anyone makes an effort to read it, half of the ingredients mentioned are beyond comprehension. If these chemical additives that are added in packaged food are so dangerous then why is it allowed to be sold in the first place by the government? To increase the shelf life of a food product, manufacturers cannot play with the lives of people. It would be better to print a warning on the packages regarding the side effects of these additives, the way it is printed on liquor and cigarette packets.

RAJESH GHORPADE, IT PROFESSIONAL



WRITE IN

Have something to list, an offbeat picture to share, a service to offer, a line drawing, suggestions or feedback? Drop us a short 'n' sweet mail — with a picture, if need be — at punespeakup@dnaindia.net. Team Speak Up: Rajesh Rao & Pooja Shukla GET IN TOUCH: Call 39888888 extn 130

Hanuman Chalisa



POSITIVE THINKING
Rajen Vakil

During my current tour of South Africa, a gentleman asked me to explain the deeper meaning of the Hanuman Chalisa, Goswami Tulsidas' wonderful poem. Here's a brief note on it.

The word Hanuman comes from 'han' meaning to kill, man is 'mat' or intelligence; the intelligence to kill the negativity within our psychic nature.

The poem starts with a *doha*, where the poet says he has cleaned his mind with the dust of his Guru's feet. He uses the word 'raj', meaning both, dust and pollen. The dust of the higher was pollen to the lower, exposing us to a deeper law of higher and lower cosmoses. For instance, if we take off some dead skin from our fingers, ants immediately come to eat it up.

When his mind was clean, it became a two-faced mirror. One side reflected life and in the other he saw Ram, Sita, and Lakshman. Here the technique of double arrowed attention is being talked about; the disciple aims one arrow of attention on the events of life and the other towards his reactions to them, leading to a state of self-ob-

servation.

Lakshman comes from 'lakshya', or aim. Our aim is to awaken from the dream we call life, and we should always hold our aim in the mirror of our mind. Ram means to play; the art of moving towards our aim with an attitude of playfulness and not as if we are carrying a heavy burden. Ram also means fire, to take the fire of suffering as if it is just a play.

Sita means bliss or 'masti'. When we live in playfulness, we extract bliss and enjoyment from every moment and event of life. Whether an event brings joy or sorrow, Ram is still married to Sita.

The poet says he was without intelligence, in a state of darkness called 'buddhihin', from which he awakens by remembering 'Sumirau Pavan Kumar' or son of the wind. Each moment we live in the darkness of our hypnosis to the events of life. To awaken from this and realise our aim, my teacher taught rhythmic breathing. He said 'sumirau pavan kumar'. By 'sumirau' he gets 'bal' or will, 'buddhi' and 'vidya' to overcome his weaknesses or 'kleshhas'.

(Rajen Vakil teaches rhythmic breathing, alternative healing therapies, and spirituality. Visit www.3srb.org or www.3stepbreath.com)

Skype brings face to face couple on divorce course

For the first time, Mumbai court used Internet technology to mediate between a warring couple — woman living in Bhopal and the man in the US

Mustafa Plumber • MUMBAI

For the first time in the history of the Bandra family court in Mumbai, computer technology was used to mediate between a warring couple living in different countries and separated for



the last four years.

On Saturday, April 28, the couple used the Skype chat service to work out an amicable solution, monitored by a trained mediator. The husband lives in the US, and the wife in Bhopal.

Advocate Hareesh Thacker, a former Bandra family court bar association president, who was appointed by the family court judge as mediator, said, "On Saturday, the husband's brother came to the court with the laptop, and we initiated our first contact online. However, due to the difference in time zones, the next sitting will be at my residence, and this will help all the parties concerned."

The order for mediation was passed by the court in the first week of April, and was filed on the plea of the husband who is seeking a divorce on grounds of cruelty.

Since the couple is residing in different countries, the use of technology was decided upon. The two work in IT, and were



married seven years ago. In 2008, after they had been together for two years, the husband filed for divorce. Since then the petition has been pending before the family court, and the couple has been living separately.

Thacker said, "It was during the hearing of the plea filed by the husband that the court saw it a case fit for mediation. Since both parties are not present, and to save time and cost, the court passed the order. Moreover, it is a hassle-free process and we are hoping the outcome will be fruitful."

DIRECTOR OF SOUTH ASIA GMAC SPEAKS ABOUT NEW SECTION — INTEGRATED REASONING — THAT HAS BEEN ADDED TO GMAT

'One should be able to process data from various sources'

Q&A

Ashish Bhardwaj

Created in 1954, the Graduate Management Aptitude Test (GMAT) is the only standardised exam designed for business and management graduates worldwide. The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), a non-profit education organisation of leading graduate business schools worldwide, is dedicated to creating access to information about management programmes. GMAC is based in Reston, Virginia, and has regional offices in London, New Delhi and Hong Kong. Manasi Saraf Joshi speaks to the regional director of GMAC, South Asia, Ashish Bhardwaj, regarding the changes in the examination pattern.

GMAT examination is adding a new section. Does it mean change in the

Integrated reasoning is a 30-minute section of 12 questions with a separate score. It will feature four new questions that will test the data-handling skills of the candidates. It will replace the analytical writing skills. We conducted a comprehensive research before introducing this section

Ashish Bhardwaj, director, GMAC, South Asia



examination pattern?

Yes, we are adding a new section called integrated reasoning in the current GMAT test, which will be first conducted on June 5.

This doesn't mean that the entire pattern has been changed, but only a new section has been added after doing a thorough global research.

Only one essay question has been replaced, while the quantitative and verbal sections will remain the same. There is also no change in the duration of the exam.

What was the research and what are

the outcomes?

We conducted a comprehensive research for nearly four-and-half years with various global business schools, students and faculties. We found out that candidates appearing for it are good in all the three sections: verbal, quantitative reasoning and analytical writing, which is the current examination pattern. But today, the corporate world is overloaded with information from multiple sources. Thus, candidates should have the right skill-set to receive information from diverse fields and conclude it. To give

candidates a taste of real work experience while at business school, we introduced this new section.

What is the new change all about?

Integrated reasoning is a 30-minute section of 12 questions with a separate score. It will feature four new questions that will test the data-handling skills of the candidates. It will replace the analytical writing skills.

How is the examination conducted? This is a computer adaptive test which means every candidate gets a

unique set of questions. The difficulty level increases as he solves the test. The test is of 800 marks that will last for three hours and 30 minutes. The analytical writing assessment will be streamlined from two 30-minute essays to one analysis of an argument essay. Immediately after the essay question, the integrated reasoning section will start. Candidates will get optional breaks before and after the quantitative sections.

How will GMAC help students to prepare for this new section?

For the first time, GMAC has come out with an Indian edition that will help to prepare for the test and will be available in Indian markets. It is priced at Rs1,499 and comes with a CD-Rom of the guide's 12th edition. Similarly, an Indian site, MBAIndia.com, has been launched for Indian students.

ALMANAC

Friday, May 4, 2012

Shri Vikram Samvat 2069, Sake Era 1934, Sun Uttarayan, Uttar Gole, Basant Ritu, Vaishakh Shukla Paksha Tryodashi till 4.35 pm, Nakshatra Hasta till 11.46 am, Yoga Vajra till 9.32 pm. Karan Kaulav till 6.19 am and after that Tautil till 4.35 pm. Then Gar till 2.45 am and Vanij starts.

Rahu Kala: 10.30 am to noon

Yam Ganda: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

Best Period: 8 am to 9.30 am & 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm

YOUR CITY—YOUR DAY

For listings, please mail at puneeventsdna@gmail.com



Workshop

What: This season, let your little one learn the art of baking. Organised by chef Meeta, the interactive bakery classes are open for all aged between 7 and 15 years. The workshop will teach how to bake your own bread, croissants, brownies, cookies and more. The workshop is priced at Rs750

When: Till May end; 3 pm to 5 pm

Where: The Flour Works restaurant, North Avenue, Kalyaninagar

Contact: (020) 26680473/4

What: Learn the simple yet stunning Warli art on paper, cardboard, fabric and pots this summer. To be conducted by Sangeeta Nayak, the six-day workshop is aimed at teaching Warli to adults

When: Till May 13

Where: Mahatma Society, Kothrud

Contact: Sangeeta Nayak 9326735000

What: Learn to draw and sketch portraits

When: Till May 12; 10.30 am

Where: Art2day, Hirabag Chowk, Tilak Road

Chat

What: DS Kulkarni Foundation to organise DSK Gappa (chat). Sandip Kulkarni and Pallavi Subhash

will attend the programme

When: 6 pm
Where: Gharkul Lawns, near Mhatre Bridge

Exhibition
What: Variety is the word at this art expo. Showcasing works of four artists — Pandit Mulay, Rajesh Pradhan, Ashish Mankar and Prashant Talnikar — is Four Palettes, an exhibition at Darpan Art Gallery

When: Till May 8; 11 am to 8 pm

Where: Darpan Art Gallery, Kalachhaya Campus, Patrakarnagar Lane, off Senapati Bapat Road

What: Innate Visuals, an art exhibition

When: Till May 15
Where: Art2Day Gallery, Erandwane

What: Art exhibition by Shola Carletti

When: 11 am to 11.30 pm
Where: Pesto Pesto, Koregaon Park

Food delight
What: Khandani Rajdhani is celebrating Mango Food Festival which will offer an interesting blend of dishes

When: Till May 31, noon to 3.30 pm and 7.30 pm to 11 pm

Where: Khandani Rajdhani outlets at Kalyaninagar, JM Road and Phoenix Market City Mall