

FSSAI Emphasises Nutrition Awareness and Food Safety for a Healthier India

07 September 2026 | News

Illness to Wellness Conference Highlights Need for Nutrition Awareness, Food Safety and Community-Level Action for a Healthier Nation



India's growing emphasis on preventive healthcare is placing nutrition and food safety at the heart of efforts to help citizens stay healthy and reduce the long-term burden of disease, said Rajit Punhani, Chief Executive Officer, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), while addressing the 'Illness to Wellness' Conference on Healthy Nutrition for a Healthy Nation.

Speaking on FSSAI's role in this transition, Punhani highlighted the Authority's efforts to combine food-safety regulation with consumer education and behavioural nudges. He cited initiatives including Eat Right School, Eat Right Campus and Eat Right Thali, along with consumer awareness campaigns, as part of efforts to encourage informed food choices.

Shri Rajit Punhani said, "There is a clear shift in the public-health landscape towards prevention, and food sits right at the centre of this transition. While ensuring that food is safe, wholesome and compliant remains FSSAI's fundamental responsibility, empowering consumers with the right information to make informed choices is equally important. Through initiatives such as Eat Right School, Eat Right Campus, Eat Right Thali and consumer awareness campaigns, we are using education, information and behavioural nudges to make nutrition awareness part of everyday life. This requires collective action, with government, healthcare, academia, civil society, industry and consumers working together to make informed food choices more accessible, affordable and convenient."

The 'Illness to Wellness' Conference on Healthy Nutrition for a Healthy Nation, organised by the Illness to Wellness Foundation, brought together policymakers, healthcare professionals, nutrition experts, educators and representatives from industry and civil society to deliberate on strengthening nutrition awareness, food safety and community-level action.

Anil Rajput, Chairperson, Advisory Council, Illness to Wellness Foundation, said, "The foundations of a healthy nation are laid much before illness takes a person to the hospital, and nutrition must be at the heart of this transition from illness to wellness. India's nutrition landscape requires us to look beyond food availability towards nutritional security, ensuring

access to food that is safe, affordable, diverse and appropriate to individual needs. It is not out of place to mention that the salt, sugar and fat requirements differ across people, regions and activities. Their needs differ and we must remain mindful of that, while creating awareness in the larger section of society. The way forward lies in promoting awareness based on science, balance, moderation and informed choices. Building a healthier India is a shared responsibility, requiring the collective efforts of government, healthcare professionals, schools, responsible industry, civil society, media and communities.”

Delivering the keynote address, Rajesh Bhushan, Former Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India and Chairperson, Governing Council, Illness to Wellness Foundation, said, “Nutrition cannot be addressed through isolated interventions; it requires a life-cycle approach beginning with pregnancy and continuing through the first 1,000 days, early childhood, school years and adulthood. The challenge is not only to create awareness but to translate that awareness into healthy behaviour, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Our frontline health workers, Anganwadi systems and schools provide an important institutional network through which nutrition interventions can reach families at scale. We already have programmes and guidelines in place; the priority now must be effective implementation, continuous monitoring and the use of practical behavioural approaches that help people make healthier choices.”

The inaugural session highlighted the importance of strengthening nutrition outcomes across different stages of life, with discussions covering maternal, child and adolescent nutrition, anaemia and malnutrition, food safety and nutrition standards, safe and nutritious food choices, and the role of different stakeholders in taking national nutrition priorities to the grassroots.

Further, taking the discussion ahead, Dr Zoya Ali Rizvi, Deputy Commissioner, National Health Mission, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, said, “The real impact of nutrition programmes will come from taking information to the grassroots and listening to the needs of communities. Our 10.5 lakh ASHAs and Anganwadi workers are the backbone of this effort, and strengthening communication through their insights can help translate awareness into meaningful action.”

Dr. Sanjay Kumar Mattoo, Joint Commissioner & Additional Deputy Director General, Central TB Division, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, said, “Malnutrition remains one of the biggest health challenges facing our society and has a close bearing on the fight against tuberculosis. Addressing this challenge requires a collective effort from all stakeholders, including the government, healthcare system, media, parents, schools and communities, to strengthen awareness and support effective action against malnutrition and TB.”