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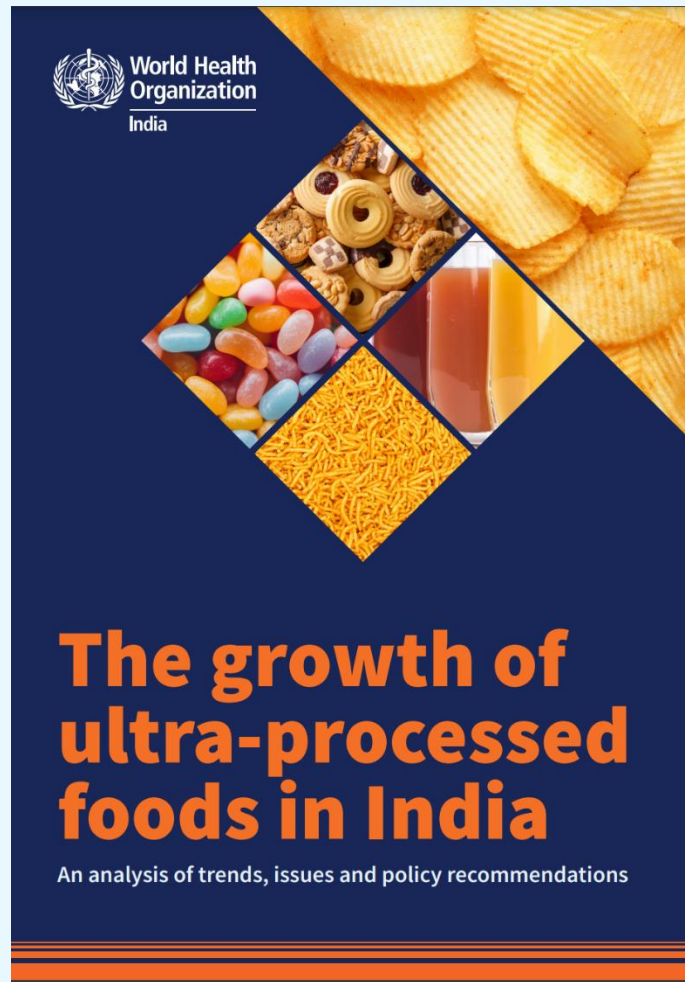


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**A deep dive: The growth of ultra-processed
foods in India, trends, issues, and policy
recommendations**



The cover page of WHO's report depicting some of the commonly consumed ultra-processed food items in India.

Dear colleagues,

Good health and nutrition have a common element - a balanced nutritious diet. Owing to the dual burden of undernutrition and overnutrition, combined with the increasing trend of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and morbidities due to diet-related attributes, the Government of India (GoI) is focusing on both food and nutrition security. The commitment is reflected across national policies and initiatives of the Government including Mission Poshan 2.0, National Health Mission, Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN), National Food Security Act (NFSA) and Millet Mission which aim to improve both availability and accessibility of nutritious foods. Other initiatives like Eat Right India, School Health and Wellness Programme, restrictions on sale of unhealthy food in and near schools, and front-of-pack food labelling are aimed at generating awareness on healthy eating habits. India has also developed a National Multisectoral Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Common NCDs, which provides a framework for coordinated response across sectors.

Undermining these efforts, however, is a rising trend in the sale and consumption of foods high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS). Studies (Global Food Research Program, 2021; Kelly, 2016; Popkin, 2017) show that there is a

universal shift from traditionally home-cooked food to more processed foods due to a variety of reasons like rising incomes and urbanisation, the growth of the modern food retail sector, intense marketing and promotion of unhealthy foods and sedentary lifestyles.

Thus, closely linked with India's rapid economic growth, is a simultaneous transition in dietary patterns. The factors listed above compound and act as major drivers of NCDs such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) and premature deaths. However, there is inadequate data on trends in sales and consumption of ultra-processed foods in India.

Towards unpacking the landscape of ultra-processed foods in India; this issue of Poshan Weekly spotlights WHO's report titled 'The growth of ultra-processed foods in India: an analysis of trends, issues and policy recommendations which offers the following nine recommendations to help India attain nutrition security:

- Have a clear and transparent definition of HFSS and its product subcategories
- Strengthen existing policies and programmes to address the dual burden of undernutrition and overnutrition

- Have nutrition-linked taxes
- Fiscal incentives should be linked to nutrition
- Implement the labelling guidelines
- Efficiently use advertisement and marketing to ensure nutrition security and restrict marketing/ advertisement of unhealthy foods
- Build awareness about healthy eating habits and the harmful impacts of unhealthy eating
- Ensure provision of healthy food under the food safety net programmes
- Have data-driven policy making

The findings in the report present a strong case for a multipronged approach to curb the rising burden of diet-related NCDs in India. To supplement the above report, we also bring WHO's guidelines on the use of non-sugar sweeteners, on carbohydrate intake for adults and children, along with WHO's guidelines on total fat intake for the prevention of unhealthy weight gain. We hope that this issue helps in understanding the trends, issues, and possible solutions in the context of ultra-processed foods to fight this battle better!

Kind regards,
Arjan De Wagt,
Chief, Nutrition Programme | UNICEF India

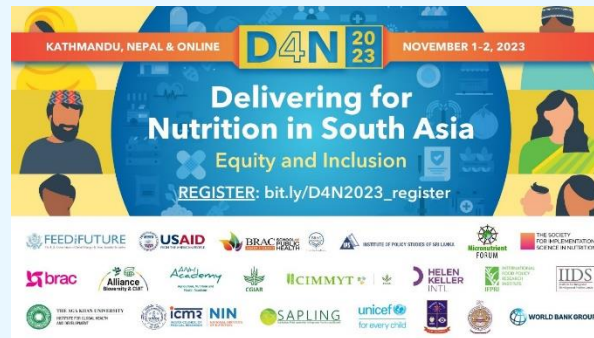
Resources

1. [The growth of ultra-processed foods in India: an analysis of trends, issues and policy recommendations](#)
2. [Use of non-sugar sweeteners: WHO guideline](#)
3. [WHO guideline on carbohydrate intake for adult and children](#)
4. [WHO guidelines on total fat intake for the prevention of unhealthy weight gain in adults and children](#)
5. [Saturated fatty acid and trans-fatty acid intake for adults and children](#)
6. [WHO's Science in 5: Are you consuming too much salt?](#)
7. [WHO: Everything you need to know about trans fat](#)

Related Publications

1. [Ultra-processed food for infants and toddlers; dynamics of supply and demand](#)
2. [The escalating health threats from ultra-processed and high fat, salt, and sugar foods: urgent need for tailoring policy](#)
3. [Intake of ultra-processed food, dietary diversity and the risk of nutritional inadequacy among adults in India](#)
4. [Intake of ultra-processed foods among adolescents from low- and middle-income families in Delhi](#)
5. [Consumers' understanding of nutrition labels for ultra-processed food products](#)
6. [Consumption of ultra processed food and risk of depression](#)
7. [Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey \(CNNS\) 2016-18](#)

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Nutrition in the news

Date	News	Source
17.10.2023	New Research Decodes Pearl Millet's Climate Resilience And Nutritional Secrets	India Education Diary
17.10.2023	FSSAI launches the Eat Right Creativity Challenge for Millets on the occasion World Food Day 2023	The Economic Times
16.10.2023	5 million meals for children through #RunForZeroHunger	The Times of India
16.10.2023	The State of Your Plate changes with an increase in your waistline	Deccan Chronicle
15.10.2023	Age of junk food: Children grapple with obesity	The Deccan Herald

15.10.2023	Nutrition can help fuel child growth	The Hans India
11.10.2023	Buddy Mothers' now part of government's protocol for management of malnutrition in children in anganwadis	Times of India
11.10.2023	Importance Of Nutrition For Children: How Parents, Families & Communities Can Contribute To It?	Free Press Journal

[Link to previous issues](#)

- 11.10.2023 [Poshan Sudha Yojana: The 'One Full Meal' scheme for maternal nutrition in Gujarat](#)
- 25.09.2023 [Vocal for local: Regional diets of India](#)

- 14.09.2023 [Introducing Anemia Mukht Bharat e-Learning Training Module](#)
- 07.08.2023 [JEEViKA: Women's collective-led social action for gender transformative action on nutrition](#)
- 01.08.2023 [WHO 2023 guidelines on use of non-sugar sweeteners, carbohydrates, fats and trans fats](#)
- 26.07.2023 [Get to know how the government supports breastfeeding for working women in India.](#)
- 12.07.2023 [IMPAct4Nutrition: Engaging with private sector to promote importance of health and nutrition.](#)
- 04.07.2023 [Promoting health, nutrition and wellness through joyful learning in schools: Resources Available!](#)
- 27.06.2023 [Enhancing eating habits among school-going children in India: Resources Available!](#)
- 20.06.2023 [Telangana prioritizes nutrition and mental health for pregnant women](#)
- 05.06.2023: [Mid-year PoshanWeekly past issues 2022-2023 list now available!](#)

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One-stop guide for nutrition resources



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Partnerships and Opportunities to Strengthen
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Government of India



Center on the Developing Child
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



Centre of Excellence for
Management of Severe Acute
Malnutrition (CoE-SAM) Network



ROSHNI
Center of Women Collectives
Led Social Action



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Mukt
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**Eat Right
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