

## **Minutes of the Meeting on 'Strategies to combat Vitamin D Deficiency in Children'**

**5<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

**FSSAI, FDA Bhawan**

One of the growing concerns affecting the population at large is the increasing incidence of Vitamin D Deficiency (VDD). Children are particularly vulnerable due to their increased requirement of calcium. The need to have adequate Vitamin D which aids in calcium absorption becomes paramount.

To address this issue, a simple strategy to be implemented through schools and the school curriculum is proposed. It has been observed that with decreasing zenith angle, conversion to active form of Vitamin D is higher. The zenith angle decreases during 11 am - 2pm (minimum is seen at 12 and 1 pm). Hence, this is the best time for our skin to synthesize Vitamin D when exposed to Sun. Therefore, it is proposed to alter simple daily activities like **shifting morning assembly to noon** in order to get maximum benefits. Other easy option is to include fortified foods like milk and edible oil fortified with Vitamin D and also Vitamin A. In this context a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Shri Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2018. List of participants is given at **Annexure 1**.

### **The key action points are as follows:**

1. Launch programme of '**Noon Assembly**' under 'Project Dhoop' to be organised at Bal Bhawan/ Navodaya Vidyalaya, Sarojini Nagar on 9<sup>th</sup> April.
2. McCann Health to work on the implementation plan for the programme.
3. Red Carpet Entertainment to prepare a skit based on the script focussed on Vitamin D, Sunlight exposure and milk fortification.
4. Kquality Ltd to work on posters and messaging around 'Milk fortification'.
5. FFRC to work with GAIN on posters of brands available with fortified milk.
6. Participation of ten schools (6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Standard students) from the following:
  - i. NDMC Schools
  - ii. North MCD Schools: Save The Children (NGO) to coordinate and invite primary school children.
  - iii. Private schools in NCR area: SNF@School team at FSSAI to coordinate with private schools
7. World Bank to take up the issue of Vitamin D and Sunlight exposure and conduct State level workshops to spread awareness.

8. FSSAI to include the concept of fortification and sunlight exposure for Vitamin D in the recommendations document to be sent to NCERT/CBSE and school boards curricular changes.

**Other recommendations**

1. McCann Health also to explore the opportunity of participation of private schools in the launch programme on an ongoing basis.
2. McCann to explore the possibility of developing a TV commercial /documentary on Vitamin D deficiency and the importance of sunlight exposure and fortification.
3. FSSAI to explore the premises of Bal Bhawan to spread messages on Food Safety & Nutrition through posters.
4. NDMC and MCD may review school uniform guidelines to increase the exposure of sunlight.
5. Schools to spread awareness on Vitamin D deficiency and the need for sunlight exposure.
6. Schools to educate children on 'fortification' and introduce fortified milk in school canteens.
7. Schools may introduce more games period during high sunlight exposure hours.
8. Schools may review uniform guidelines to increase exposure to sunlight to enable absorption of Vitamin D.
9. Schools may choose to introduce 'Weekly Sunshine Day'.

**List of Participants**

1. Mr. Pawan Agarwal, Chief Executive Officer, FSSAI
2. Maj. Gen. Dr RK Marwaha
3. Mr. Ramesh Chander, NDMC
4. Mr. R.P. Gupta, NDMC
5. Major. Harsh Kumar, NCERT
6. Dr. Shweta Singh, CBSE
7. Mr. Mukesh Gupta, National Bal Bhawan
8. Ms. Kamy Elawadhi, Mc Cann Health
9. Mr. Alok Saini, Mc Cann Health
10. Mr. Daleep, Mc Cann Health
11. Mr. Varun Mahajan, Kwality
12. Ms. Neha Pandhi, Kwality
13. Mr. Kabir Basu Roy, Kwality
14. Mr. K T Krishna Rao, Kwality
15. Dr. S. K. Mathur, SEHEAC
16. Ms. Deepika Anand, World Bank
17. Ms. Deepti Gulati, GAIN
18. Dr. Meenu Singh, Vital Strategies
19. Ms. Shivani Parashar, Save the Children
20. Mr. Swadeep Srivastava, Heal Foundation
21. Ms. Rachna Sharma, Child Survival India
22. Ms. Megha Johnson, Red Carpet
23. Ms. Juhi Arora, SHARP
24. Ms. Steffy James, SHARP
25. Ms. Deepa Bajaj, Child Survival India
26. Ms. Garima Singh, Mondelez
27. Ms. Namrata Khanna, FSSAI
28. Ms. Pritha Ghosh, FSSAI
29. Ms. Mallika Taneja, FSSAI
30. Ms. Ruchika, FSSAI
31. Ms. Rohini Saran, Deputy Lead, FFRC, FSSAI
32. Ms. Deeksha Bhatt, Coordinator, FFRC, FSSAI
33. Ms. Vithika Krishnawat, Coordinator, FFRC, FSSAI
34. Ms. Vijeta Singhari, Officer, FFRC, FSSAI