Unhealthy practice: Eateries in city don’t use iodised salt

VIJAYAWADA: Think twice before ordering a meal from restaurants and hotels, else you end up with problems of infertility and other iodine deficiency disorders like autism in children, goiter (a common thyroid-malfunction based condition), thyroid, mental imbalances such as depression and anxiety, mental retardation and fetal hypothyroidism in pregnant women. The food which you have ordered from restaurants or being served at hotels, night food courts and other roadside stalls is usually prepared with sub-standard, poor quality and non-iodised salt. The shocking fact came to light during raids conducted by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.
(FSSAI) officials at various restaurants and food joints in the city.

“We have identified over 10 restaurants and many food stalls using locally made salt which has no iodine content in food,” assistant controller FSSAI, N Poornachandra Rao said. According to the fourth edition report of National Family Health Survey (NHFS), over 90 percent of the urban households and 77 percent of the rural households and only 71 percent of the tribal households are using iodised salt for regular cooking in the State. “Whatever the salt may be, it should contain iodine. More than 90 percent of salt available in the State is coming from Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu. Commercial Tax and Vigilance officials concerned should check the quality and sources from where the salt is being imported,” Poornachandra Rao felt.

Also, doctors suggested that iodine is an important nutrient for thyroid functioning and the youth are facing infertility problems with the food being prepared with non-iodised salt. “The recent health studies suggest that lack of iodine in food is leading to infertility-related problems in both men and women. They should avoid eating outside and have to eat home-made food. If you do not have enough iodine in your body, you cannot produce enough hormones,” said a city-based general physician D Bhavya.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- One should take a quarter teaspoon salt, or 1.5 g, as that contains 71 mcg, or 47 percent daily value
- The recommended intake of iodine from the age of 14 years is 150 micrograms (mcg) for both males and females
- During pregnancy, it is 220 mcg, rising to 290 mcg while breastfeeding
- FSSAI officials are planning to conduct awareness campaigns for youth to educate on problems related to non-iodised salt