

Healthy food may replace junk

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Union minister for women and child development (WCD) Maneka Gandhi is all set to propose to ban junk food from school canteens and substituting it with healthy options.

Ministry officials say that the minister is considering to take up the matter with the ministry of human resources development (HRD) and the health ministry. While, the mid day meal scheme comes under the HRD, the health

ministry's Food Safety and Security of India (FSSAI) is already working on guidelines for the schools proposing healthy snacks in the school canteens.

A Delhi high court panel is also looking into the dietary habits of school-going children and is expected to come out with the recommendations for the schools, following a PIL filed by the Uday foundation, a Non government organisation (NGO) seeking a ban on junk food sold in schools, regulations on junk food promotion and



advertisement and development of school canteen policy. However, four years after the PIL was filed, the matter is still pending.

The idea is to recommend guidelines to make available good quality, safe food to students in school canteens.

in school canteens

● **Experts have suggested whole wheat roti, poori with seasonal vegetable, multi-whole grain roti/poori with seasonal vegetable, rice and dal, vegetable pulao, rice and red beans, rice and black chana, sweet dalia, rice and white chana, idli, vada, sambar, instead of samosas, pakoras**

It is learnt that in their recommendations, experts have suggested whole wheat roti, poori with seasonal vegetable, multi-whole grain *roti/poori* with seasonal vegetable, rice and dal, vegetable pulao, rice and red beans, rice and black *chana*, sweet dalia, rice and white *chana*, idli, vada, sambar, kheer and milk products like curd, buttermilk and lassi to be substituted from the existing menu that includes *samosas*, bread *pakoras* etc.

Experts, including Ms.

Sunita Narain, along with paediatricians and nutritionists worked representatives of industry associations submitted a document titled "Guidelines on Wholesome Food and Nutrition for School Canteen" to the expert group on January 16, 2013.

"While the recommendations is yet to see the light of the day with the case pending in the court, the minister wants to give a push to the ministry's involved as the issue involves the health of children," added an official.