



THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS



Wednesday, June,
07, 2023 05:24:51
PM

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Take steps to prevent rising burden of non-communicable diseases in India: NAPI

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Published: 02nd June 2023 08:45 AM | Last Updated: 02nd June 2023 08:45 AM

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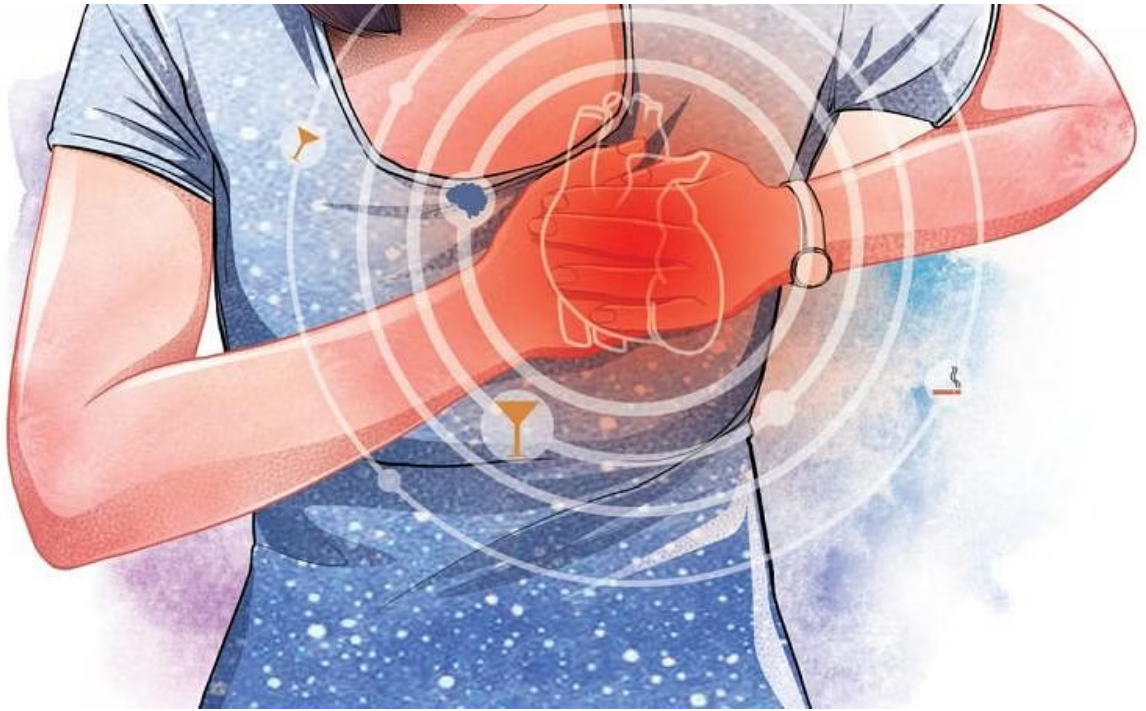


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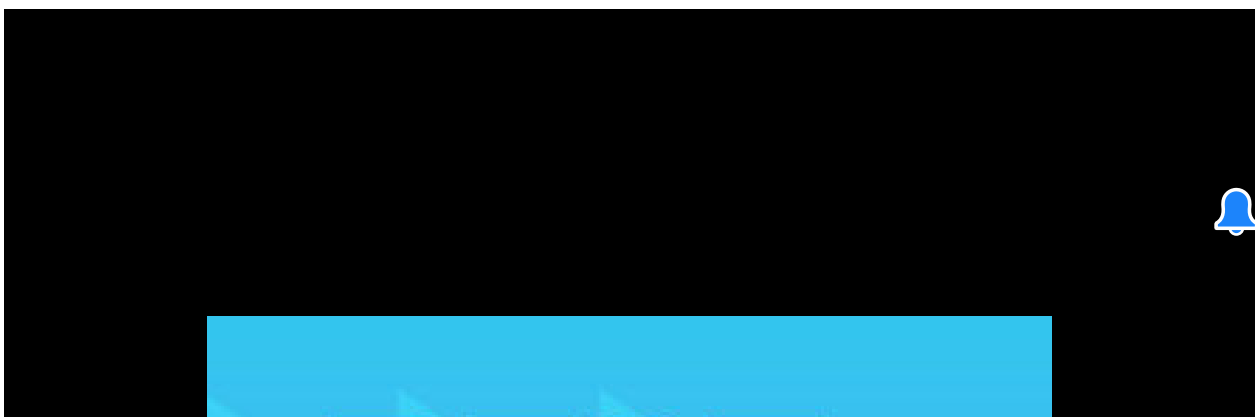
By Express News Service

NEW DELHI: The Nutrition Advocacy in Public Interest-India (NAPi), a national think-tank of independent medical experts, paediatricians and nutritionists, has written to Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya to undertake urgent steps to prevent the rising burden of non-communicable diseases (NCD) in India.

In a letter to the minister, the think-tank suggested that legislation can be brought that harmonises food safety regulations with the Consumer Protection Act 2019, as both deal with misleading advertisements, and objectively define 'healthy food' in a bid to prevent NCD cases and mortality.

It is estimated that around 5.8 million people die from NCDs each year, and the proportion of deaths due to NCDs (among all deaths) increased from 37 per cent in 1990 to 61 per cent in 2016. In India, 56 per cent of children between 5 to 19 years of age showed cardio-metabolic risk factors.

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One of the main risk factors for the occurrence of obesity and NCDs is the increase in consumption of ultra-processed food (UPF) products, which are characterised by industrial processing, cosmetic additives, flavouring and colouring agents, high sugar, fat and sodium content that are available as pre-packaged and aggressively marketed, which leads to decrease in consumption of minimally processed or fresh foods.

“India is witnessing a public health crisis of huge proportions. Obesity is increasing rapidly in India in children under five. In adult men and women, obesity increased by almost 25 per cent during the past five years,” the letter signed by Dr Arun Gupta, child health and nutrition advocate and NAPI convener; Dr Vandana Prasad, community paediatrician, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan; professor HPS Sachdev, senior paediatrician and epidemiologist; Dr Umesh Kapil, secretary, National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS) among other experts.

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TAGS NAPI Mansukh Mandaviya

