WASH WHAT YOU EAT!

The popular phrase “Watch what you eat” may no longer apply only to the Calorie conscious but to everyone! A new phrase “Wash what you eat” may also become popular!!

A recent study done by the Pesticide Residue Testing Laboratory (PRTL) has shown high level of pesticide residues in fruits and vegetables collected from local vendors and shops from different parts of Pune.

Pesticide residues were found in vegetables such as Bitter gourd, Bottle gourd, Brinjal, Capsicum, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Cucumber, Tomatoes and Raisins. Some samples were found to have residues of banned pesticides such as Chlordane, Carbofuran, Captofol and DDT.

It is very important that the amount of pesticide intake from different food products such as fruits, vegetables, milk and water does not exceed the acceptable daily intake (ADI) to prevent any health hazard. Animal studies have proven that pesticide intake can cause damage to the brain, liver, kidney and may even cause hormonal disturbances in cases of long term consumption by humans.

Important Steps to be taken are:

Educate Farmers:
- To use pesticides sparingly.
- To stop using pesticides well in advance (10-15 days) before selling to the market.

Consumers should:
- Wash fruits and vegetables 2 or 3 times in warm water with pinch of salt.
- Gradually start using organic produces.

Source: www.foodsafetynews.wordpress.com

PREFER LOW SODIUM BREAD AND CEREAL!!

A recent analysis of food records in the United Kingdom has revealed that the main sources of sodium are found in the following products:

- Bread and Bakery products (13%)
- Cereal Products accounted (5%)
- Processed meats (18%)
- Sauces and spreads (11%)

Those of you, who are limiting the use of added salt, salty spices and other commonly accepted sources of high sodium due to clinical conditions, are advised that the impact of sodium from bread and cereal products can be expected to be higher. So exercise care!

Both bread and cereals have no intrinsic sodium content and their salt load is entirely due to the addition either during preparation or packing. Most bread sold in Bakery outlets and shops contain high salt content.

THE BAD NEWS IS...

Three out of four packaged foods available across the country fail to display salt levels despite regulations put in place by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) defining the minimum requirements for labeling the nutritional content of such products.

This finding is really alarming as consumers today are dependent on such packaged food more and more and are not aware of the salt content present in it!

Source 2: www.foodsafetynews.wordpress.com

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What do you think is the biggest challenge faced by India today? - Corruption, over-population or illiteracy? The answer is - Water Crisis or the lack of access to clean ground water!!

As if the existing water problem was not enough, the population bursting at it seams and excessive pollution is adding to the already looming problem!

India is headed for a groundwater emergency because of changing lifestyles and growing competition for water amongst cities and industries.

Gross Mismanagement and exploitation by the powers-that-be has driven us to this sorry state despite of having an abundance of water, not so many years back! Groundwater levels have steadily fallen across India with the steepest of decline in the most heavily farmed areas, urban and industrially active areas

For example, in Bangalore, till the 1980s, the city depended on wells for all its water. Thanks to technology boom and population explosion, ground water levels have fallen steeply and the City now spends vast amounts to bring water from the Cauvery River. Another example is Gurgaon where builders constructed apartments, huge malls and commercial buildings at a rapid pace, without any thought to the impact on the ground water levels. Sadly, by 2015, Gurgaon will run out of Groundwater.

Source: “One India One People” Magazine, March 2014

**A FLUID SITUATION**

- 30% of rural Indians lack drinking water supply
- Only 7 states have full drinking water access in rural areas
- Farms use 90% of India’s water resources
- Industry use of 6%
- freshwater, will double in 10 yrs

Source: World Bank, Unicef

**Sources of water pollution**

- Seepage of pollutants from the surface due to the continuous injection of toxic effluents and by-products from industries.
- Excess pesticide and fertilizer run off from agricultural lands due to the unregulated massive amounts being sprayed.
- 70% of the Indian population defecates in the open in rural India. This poses as another major source of water pollution. What compounds the issue is the general ignorance of public who do not realize the extent of diseases that could be caused by exposed human excreta.

**Probable Solutions...**

- Training today’s Engineers to build effective and sustainable water system.
- Effective Water Management by the Government keeping the geographical conditions in mind
- Improve Water Supply systems and minimize water losses due to leakage.
- Industries pumping toxins into groundwater should be penalized heavily.
- Cities discharging untreated sewage into Rivers should be held responsible for the resulting illness.
- Every individual residing in the city should take responsibility not to pollute the environment.
NO MORE STETHOSCOPES?

Stethoscopes, an instrument invented more than 200 years ago, carried by Doctors everywhere as standard gear, may go out of use and be replaced by ultrasonic Devices!

“God forbid! How can they probably replace Stethoscopes? Having lived with them for more than 3 decades in the field of medicine, I cannot imagine a Doctor without a stethoscope!” exclaimed Dr. J .S .N. Murthy, Vice Chancellor and Professor of Cardiology, Sri Ramachandra University and Medical Centre, Chennai.

He pointed out how great doctors till the 80s were known for their great skills and diagnosis primarily using Stethoscopes. Fairly accurate diagnosis was done at the patient’s bedside by means of physical examination, Stethoscope, X-Rays and ECG.

How does the Stethoscope help?

✓ A stethoscope can assess heart function and any obstruction and leakage of its valves. It can predict and follow-up the effects of treatment of heart failure.

✓ Most birth defects involving the heart can be diagnosed fairly well by the use of the stethoscope, besides ECG, X-ray and Echocardiogram.

✓ An obstetrician can listen to foetal heartbeat during advanced pregnancy with a fair amount of accuracy with a simple Foetoscope and predict foetal distress.

✓ An Intensivist in the intensive care unit uses a Stethoscope to continuously monitor the heart, lungs and abdomen.

✓ A general Surgeon requires a Stethoscope to listen to bowel sounds during the post-operative period.

There is no doubt that the Ultrasound could be more accurate for Chest X-Rays for detection of some specific problems and visualization of Cardiac valve function. But it should be only used as an additional investigation tool for a specific purpose and not for routine testing purposes.

Source: The Hindu, New Delhi, 16th March 2014.

FOOD LABELLING AWARENESS

One tends to purchase products from a Departmental Shop or a mall always in a state of hurry without much application of mind! But in today’s world, it is very important that we look into certain details whilst purchasing most of the products – more so in respect of food items! We give below some basic information that should be borne in mind when buying food items:

✓ Declaration of Vegetarian or Non-Vegetarian Food: A food product label must have the identification mark “Vegetarian” or “Non-vegetarian” for the category of food. It is mandatory for all food manufacturers to indicate if the food item contains any non-vegetarian ingredients or not. Vegetarian food product will bear a GREEN COLOR filled circle symbol while Non-vegetarian product will bear a BROWN COLOR filled circle symbol.

✓ Declaration of Food Additives: If there are any additives in the food product, it must be mentioned on the label in accordance to the Food Safety and Standards (packaging and Labeling) Regulations 2011, notified by FSSAI. If Colour or flavour is added to a food product, it must be mentioned in CAPITAL LETTERS just below the list of ingredients and the name of the Colour or flavour used should be included in the list of ingredients.

✓ Declaration of Lot/Code/Batch Number: Every Food Business Operator (FBO) must define & mention Batch, Lot, Code number on all the containers of the product, to be referred under incidents of examination on suspicion by the regulatory body or on action upon consumer complaints. In case one has a complaint against a particular food product, the first step of investigation is to note down Batch No. /Lot No. of the product so that food packages having the same Batch/Lot No. can be examined with respect to the complaint. If the FBO, after investigation, believes that the food item, manufactured or distributed, is not in compliance with the FSS Act, then they shall initiate procedures to immediately withdraw the food in question from the market. In case the FBO does not initiate action, Legal action may be initiated against the manufacturer or the processor may be directed that the entire quantity of the particular Batch or Lot No. is traced and the food be recalled.

Source: www.foodsafetynews.wordpress.com
DID YOU KNOW?

✅ COUGH SYRUPS DON’T WORK!!

Most Chest Physicians accept that majority of the over-the-counter Cough Syrup medicines don’t necessarily serve their purpose. The colorful syrups typically contain doses of codeine and Dextromethorphan that are too small to be effective!

✅ WALKING IS AS EFFECTIVE AS RUNNING:

Studies have shown that how long you exercise and thus how many calories you burn is more important than how hard you exercise. Running is a more efficient form of exercise, but not necessarily better for you. Therefore, simply walk!!

Source: www.wisegeek.com

CAI NEWS!

“PROTECT YOUR PHONE RIGHTS”

As you may be aware, the 47th seminar of Consumers Association of India (CAI) was held on Saturday, 22nd March, 2014. A total of 150 participants comprising of consumer activists, consumers, members, students, service providers, lawyers, doctors and Government officials attended the seminar.

HIGHLIGHTS OF EACH SESSION:

✅ Survey Presentation Session:
A survey was conducted by the student chapters of MOP Vaishnav College, Ethiraj College and JBAS College for Women which brought forth some interesting statistics on the low awareness levels of mobile users regarding the various options available for accelerating their complaints.

According to the information shared by the Legal team of CAI, Telephony related Complaints were the second highest amongst all complaints received between 2011 and 2014.

✅ Panel Discussion Session:
The main point that came out of the discussion was the need for fair contracts in simple understandable language, transparent billing for services and easy understanding of Value Added Services.

✅ Grievance Redressal Session:
This Session highlighted the importance of Grievance redressal of issues like Call drops, Mobile Coverage and Signal Availability. Consumer Activists on one side insisted the need for better visibility and accessibility of organizations that would help in redressal of complaints for Consumers. The former Advisor from Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) talked of the importance of the role of TRAI in getting speedy Redressal.

✅ Consumer Friendly Safety Measures Session:
Consumers were cautioned by a Medical Doctor to judiciously use mobile phones so as to avoid possible effects of the harmful radiation. Dangers of mobile towers were analyzed in great detail by an expert on the subject. He cautioned about the dangers of more than a permitted number of Mobile Towers present in a designated area and the fact that the tower has to be at certain distance

QUICK REMINDER- COMPARATIVE TESTING SEMINAR

TOPIC: Comparative Testing Results-Detergents and Fairness creams
DATE: 18th April 2014
TIME: 10:00 A.M.- 1:00 P.M.
VENUE- Gandhi Nagar Club, Adyar
Today’s youngsters are more stressed out than the earlier generation and now heart disease is no more an ailment only of the old! Unfortunately, the youth of today have become the most vulnerable to Coronary Artery Diseases and Myocardial Infarction or in other words Heart Attack!

**FRIGHTENING FACTS**

- Four people die of heart attack every minute in India and the age group is mainly between 30 and 50.
- Twenty-five per cent of heart attack deaths occur in people less than 40.
- Nine hundred people under 30 die due to heart disease in India every day. *(The Hindu, 15th December 2013)*

**MOST COMMON REASONS FOR OCCURRENCE:**

- **Smoking:** The habit that could lead to pre-mature heart attacks and sudden death is smoking. What begins as a harmless habit turns out to become an addiction and risk of Heart Attack in smokers is two times higher than normal people.

  **Fact:** When a person quits smoking, the body and heart needs 3 years to recover from the effects of tobacco.

- **High Cholesterol Levels:** Excess cholesterol deposits narrow the artery passage and consequently blood supply to the heart and can lead to heart attacks.

- **Diabetes:** A Diabetic patient in comparison to a non-Diabetic patient will suffer a severe attack and respond poorly to treatment. Diabetes Mellitus too is no longer a disease for the Old! It has become a common amongst quite a few youngsters today!

- **Hypertension:** Changing food habits (which has resulted in increased salt consumption), Stress and Sedentary life have contributed to the rise of hypertension in youngsters.

- **Obesity:** Obesity is a combination of physical inactivity, stress and unhealthy food intake. An obese person can very easily develop high B.P condition, Diabetes and high cholesterol which could lead to a heart attack.

- **Unhealthy food habits:** Fast food has become the in-thing today. Most youngsters depend on fast food, restaurant food etc for their daily meals. Unfortunately, none of these foods are prepared keeping in mind the health of the large population consuming it. This, therefore, creates health issues.

- **Lack of physical activity:** Very few realize the importance of daily exercise to keep the body and mind fit. Lack of Physical activity coupled with bad sleeping habits, high stress levels and unhealthy food habits, is certain to result in severe health complications!

- **Genetics:** To protect your heart, the first step is to learn your own personal risk factors for heart disease. Risk factors are conditions or habits that make you more likely to develop a disease. Risk factors can also increase the chances that an existing disease will get worse. Certain risk factors-like getting older or having a family history of heart disease cannot be changed. But you do have control over some important risk factors such as high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, excess weight, diabetes and physical inactivity!

- **Lack of Awareness:** Poor people are more susceptible because they are ignorant of such ailments on account of illiteracy as well as the absence of adequate number of affordable health care facilities.

**What about those who are aware and have the luxury for quality treatment- Are they ignorant? Or are they playing with danger?**
CONSUMER CASES SOLVED BY CAI

COMPLAINT AGAINST MTS INSTRUMENTS GROUP

Complaint Nature:
I have recently purchased a Prepaid MBLAZE Ultra Wi-Fi Dongle after seeing the plan on the MTS Website. As per the information on the website to carry forward the balance data to the next month I recharged Rs 248 to avail this facility. However as per the MTS Customer care executive, I have to recharge an amount Rs. 399 to avail the facility. This is misleading. The MTS Website shows something and when I discuss the same with the customer care I am getting a different answer. When enquired in detail, they said that website has not been updated and is in the process of updating. My purchase decision was purely on the information available on their website. Thus they should allow me to continue with Recharge of Rs. 248. Please help me with this.

Mr. Jitendra Patel

Solution:
After CAI’s mediation, the complaint was allowed to recharge his account with the original value of Rs.248 earlier published on the Website.

Mr. Jitendra’s Testimonial:
“Thank you for your help to resolve the issue!”

COMPLAINT AGAINST AQUAGUARD WATER PURIFIER SYSTEMS

Complaint Nature:
I recently purchased the enhanced model of Aquaguard in the month of July, 2013. When I purchased, they promised me four free services in the first year. There has been no service since then. I requested for service through their customer care in the month of October 2013. There has been no action taken till now. I requested for service again in the month of December 2013, still there has been no action till now. I again placed a call to the customer care in the month of January 2014, but yet to receive any service. Please help me with this.

Mr. Ashwin

Solution:
After CAI’s mediation, the complainant received the first service from Aquaguard in the month of January 2014 itself.

Mr. Ashwin’s Testimonial:
“I confirm that the representative from Aquaguard contacted me and rendered the first free service. Thank you for your intervention.”

CAI is here to help

Consumers Association of India (CAI)
A5, 2nd Main Road, Thiruvalluvar Nagar,
Thiruvanmiyur, Chennai – 600041
Phone: (044) 24513191/92

CONSUMER HELPLINE:- 044-6633 4346
Do you have a complaint against a manufacturer, trader or service provider? If yes, CAI is here to help. Call our Helpline ANYTIME and record your complaint either in Tamil or English. We will get back to you within three working days.