

Fish is safe to eat: CIFT

Sudha.Nambudiri@timesgroup.com

Kochi: The Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) has issued an advisory stating that fish is safe to eat as coronavirus cannot infect aquatic animals. However, it has cautioned that transmission could be through containers and hence disinfection practices should be strictly imposed. CIFT is the national referral agency for fish safety testing for FSSAI.

The advisory based on Food and Agricultural Organisations' (FAO) recommendations. "Fish is a source of high protein and is a staple food of the majority of people in Kerala. It is the source of nutritional security for fishers too. So we should ensure supply of the fish even while keeping the communities safe from Covid," said T V Sankar, principal scientist, CIFT.

As the demand for fish has not diminished he said the government will need to look for ways to ensure food safety. "They will have to concentrate on the supply

The Central Institute of Fisheries Technology has, however, insisted on disinfecting containers that could be a source of Covid-19 infection

chain which will have to strictly controlled. The danger lies when an infected person sneezes or coughs. The virus will settle on the surface which could lead to the spread of infection," he said.

Current evidence on other coronavirus strains indicated that though it appears to be stable at low and freezing temperatures for a certain period, food hygiene and good food safety practices can prevent their transmission through food. "Cooking in thermal heat keeps the fish safe. Coronaviruses can be destroyed even in normal cooking temperatures (70°C). Therefore, as a general rule, the consumption of raw or undercooked animal products should be avoided," the CIFT advisory said.