

FSSAI issues health claim directions under food fortification regulations

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Shraddha Joshi, Mumbai

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued directions regarding the claims to be mentioned on the products under the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2011. According to the country's apex food regulator, this was done in order to maintain uniformity in health claims.

As per the directive, the said regulations were made operational from December 2016. These regulations included standards for wheat flour, rice, edible oil, milk and salt, which can be fortified with micro-nutrients like Vitamins A and D, iron, folic acid, Vitamin B12, zinc, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and pyridoxine.

To have an uniformity, the apex regulator suggested scientifically substantiated health claims which can be used in a broader form for the fortified foods against respective micro-nutrients fortified in accordance under the specified regulation.

Giving details about the same, an FSSAI official informed, "The suggested health claims issued should be mentioned on the product by the manufacturers. In case of additions to these claims, prior approval from the scientific panel on packaging and labelling of FSSAI is required. If the procedure is not followed, the product can be termed under the misbranded category and may face legal action."

The health claims made by the apex regulator were as follows:

Nutrient	Claim
Vitamin A	Helps against night blindness
Vitamin D	Support strong bones
Vitamin B12	Important for maintaining the normal functioning of the nervous system and blood formation
Folate and folic acid	Important for foetal development and blood formation
Iron	Fight anaemia
Iodine	Required for normal growth, thyroid and brain function
Zinc	Supports a healthy immune system
Thiamine	Required for normal nerve and heart functions
Riboflavin	Necessary to release energy from food
Niacin	Necessary to release energy from food
Pyridoxine	Necessary to release energy from food

It added that the claims should comply with the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and Regulations, 2011, made specifically for packaging and labelling requirements as laid down under the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011.