

Press Release

Food Fortification Final Notification of Standards for Big Boost to Optimize the Goodness of Food

New Delhi, Thurs 9th Aug 2018: The Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018 have been notified in the Gazette of India. Food Fortification is a scientifically proven, cost-effective, scalable and sustainable global intervention that addresses the issue of micronutrient deficiencies. In October 2016, FSSAI operationalized the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2016 for fortifying staples namely Wheat Flour and Rice (with Iron, Vitamin B12 and Folic Acid), Milk and Edible Oil (with Vitamins A and D) and Double Fortified Salt (with Iodine and Iron) to reduce the high burden of micronutrient malnutrition in India. The '+F' logo has been notified to identify fortified foods. Scientific Health Claims for label declaration of fortified foods approved by the Scientific Panel on Nutrition and Fortification were also released. With the regulations being notified in the Gazette of India, FSSAI has firmly placed food fortification on the national agenda. This has created an enabling environment and encouraged food businesses to adopt food fortification.

New standards now provide a minima and a maxima range for fortification of staples like wheat flour (*atta*), *maida*, rice, salt, vegetable oil and milk. In the gazette standards, the dosage of the micronutrients has been adjusted so that they provide 30 to 50 percent of the daily requirements. In milk and oil, the unit of dosage has been changed to micrograms Retinol Equivalent for Vitamin A and micrograms for Vitamin D from IU. In Wheat Flour and Rice fortification, other sources of Iron have been added, Vanaspati fortification has been excluded.

Since the adoption of the standards, 62 top companies and their 110 brands of all five fortified staples are available in the open market across the nation. For details of the fortified brands available visit <http://ffrc.fssai.gov.in>. There has been tremendous traction in the oil and milk industry, with 47 percent packaged refined edible oil industry and 21 percent of the organized milk industry fortifying as per FSSAI standards. Over two years since operationalization of standards edible vegetable oil industry has adopted fortification as a best practice. Following this, mandatory oil fortification is proposed to be the way forward.

As a result of massive advocacy launched by FSSAI and Food Fortification Resource Centre (FFRC), fortified staples (wheat flour, oil and DFS) are being used in Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM). It has been made mandatory since 2017 by Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Human Resource Development, respectively. As of today, 15 States like Odisha, Karnataka, Haryana, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, West Bengal, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh and 3 UTs have now adopted fortification of their chosen commodities at the district or at scale in the government safety net programmes (SNP) namely ICDS, MDM and PDS.

For immediate release

Envisaging the need for a strategic shift to scale up fortification in government funded programmes, FSSAI has published a report *“Food Fortification in India: Status and Road Ahead - Need for a Strategic Shift for Further Scale Up”*. The report highlights various actions at both the central and the State level. The report estimates that with a mere additional rupees 300 crores that is just about one percent of the overall outlay to the existing budget allocated to ICDS and MDM schemes, fortification can be rolled out across all States/ UTs. It is now felt that a large scale communication campaign is needed to create a demand side pull for motivating other businesses to produce fortified products. This will ensure sustained availability of fortified products and in turn create a nation free from micronutrient malnutrition.

FSSAI set up FFRC with the support of TATA Trusts to promote and support large scale implementation of food fortification in the SNP as well as ensure availability of fortified products in the open market. FFRC provides end-to-end technical support as well as advocacy in collaboration with development partners like TATA Trusts, GAIN, PATH, WFP, World Bank and NI.

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