



FSSAI restricts use of potassium bromate as additives in food products

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FSSAI has directed manufacturers of food products to stop using potassium bromate as an additive. The country's apex food regulator clarified that its use as an additive in food products will not be permitted under any circumstances.

The recent directive issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) read, "It is to again clarify that use of potassium bromate as an additive in any food is not allowed under any circumstances."

Srishti Sharma, owner, Little Foods, Pune, explained, "Potassium bromate is mostly used in making breads and is banned by the food authorities in most Western countries and regions, including the European Union, the United Kingdom and Australia."

"Only the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) permits it. It is also used by flour mills for refined flour. But as the USFDA rules are of a very stringent nature, the use of potassium bromate is allowed in a prescribed limit, i.e. 0.0075 part for each 100 parts by weight of flour used," she added.

Sharma said, "Potassium bromate is very good oxidising agent which gives rise and puffiness in breads. However, it is classified as a Category 2B carcinogen. So when the bread is baked, potassium bromate is still present in it and is thus harmful for human consumption. The World Health Organisation's (WHO) list of ingredients causing cancer also includes potassium bromate."

"It is a positive move by the apex regulator to clarify again and ban the use of potassium bromate in any food article," she added.

FSSAI issued gazette notification in September 2016, prescribing the revised provisions for the use of food additives in various food and food categories, including the vertical standards of food products.

Last October, FSSAI-based representations received by stakeholders enforced the earlier regulation with the exception of certain food additives that were existent earlier, but either got deleted subsequently or had different usage levels. It also

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prohibited the use of potassium bromate as an additive in any food.

Post-controversy, with regards to potassium bromate used in bread and bakery products, based on the study by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), FSSAI has decided to remove it from the approved list of additives.

A CSE study in May 2016 highlighted the use and presence of residues of potassium bromate and/or potassium iodate in bread-making in India. These chemicals have been banned in several countries worldwide due to their possible adverse health effects. Potassium bromate is a known possible cancer-causing chemical.