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Karnataka government plans fortified food for stronger, healthier children

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BENGALURU: With the aim of making children healthy and strong, the health department will be launching five fortified products with additional nutrients, which will be made mandatory for children's consumption. The five products planned to be fortified are milk, salt, oil, rice and wheat. When this plan is executed, Karnataka will become the second state to make mandatory fortified food products available to its masses, after Rajasthan.

The state health department officials had convened a meeting on Thursday to thrash out plans to introduce fortified food products and identify nutrients that will be added to these products. On Friday, another round of meeting is planned — this time with officials of FSSAI. The health department identified these five food products for fortification because these are consumed on a daily basis by children as well as adults. As part of the plan, producers of fortified food have to ensure that adequate and required nutritional supplements are added to these products.

Senior health department officials told The New Indian Express that with inadequate nutrients children suffered from various health issues. "For instance, due to lack of vitamin A, children have problems with eyesight. Similarly, due to lack of vitamin D, bones become weak. In order to create a strong generation, we need to provide children with the required nutrients," said a department official.

Harshavardhan B, Joint Commissioner, Food Safety Commissionerate, told Express that a meeting was also convened with the stakeholders concerned. "We are going to launch it in the state very soon. We will be the second state to make fortified food products mandatory after Rajasthan. Once it is launched, manufacturers and vendors have to sell these products. People should check if these contents (the additional nutrients) are there in these products, and only then buy," he said.

The health department also plans to publicise the fortified food products as awareness is crucial. "With the help of media, we will sensitise people and make them buy these products — after all, it is for their

Products	Nutrients
Milk	Vitamin A and B
Cooking Oil	Vitamin A and D
Salt	Iodine and Iron
Wheat	Iron, Folic Acid, Vitamins B12, B3, B1, B2 and B6
Rice	Vitamins A, B12, B3, B1, B2 and B6, iron, folic acid

FSSAI IN NEWS

benefit,” said the senior official.

Prof M B Rajegowda, an agrometeorologist, who works at UAS, said, “We have requested agriculture minister Krishna Byregowda to give incentives or better support price for such products that have additional nutrients. We need to encourage growers of such products,” he added. He said based on geographical area and rainfall pattern, not just these food products, even vegetables and fruits can be added with nutrients.