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FSSAI Lays Down Norms for Chemicals in Food Products

Regulations prescribe different parameters and limits of permissible additives, including artificial colours, to be used in different food products.

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India(FSSAI) under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, has laid down strict norms regarding standards of food products and additives to be used in food products to ensure the safety of these products.

The standards for the processed foods, including baby foods, are specified under the Food Safety and Standards (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011 and Food Safety and Standards (Health Supplements, Nutraceuticals, Food for Special Dietary Use, Food for Special Medical Purpose, Functional Foods and Novel Food) Regulations, 2016.

These regulations prescribe different parameters and limits of permissible additives, including artificial colours, to be used in different food products.

Further Food Safety and Standards(Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011 prescribe limits for contaminants, toxins and pesticides/insecticides/ antibiotic residues for the different food categories.

Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations, 2011, inter-alia, prescribes that 'No person shall manufacture, sell, store or exhibit for sale, an infant milk food, infant formula and milk cereal-based weaning food, processed cereal-based weaning food and follow up formula except under Bureau of Indian Standards Certification Mark'

A Food Business Operator has to ensure compliance with Food Safety and Standards Act and Rules and Regulations made thereunder so that the processed products, including baby food products, are safe for consumption.

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Compliance with these standards is ensured through the States/UTs which are primarily responsible for enforcement of the provisions of Food Safety and Standards Act, Rules and Regulations.

As per Section 18(3) of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, the provisions of the Act do not apply to any farmer or fisherman or farming operations or crops or livestock or aquaculture.

However, FSSAI has laid down strict standards and norms through various regulations to ensure the safety of food products for human consumption.

Regular surveillance, monitoring, inspection and random sampling of food products, are undertaken by the officials of Food Safety Departments of the respective States/ UTs to check that these comply with the standards laid down under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and the rules and regulations made thereunder.

In cases where the food samples are found to be non-conforming, recourse is taken to penal provisions under Chapter IX of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

FSSAI also takes up these issues, including media reports , about the use of harmful chemicals and artificial colours with the States/UTs advising them to take strict action for ensuring the quality and safety of food.