

FSSAI directs States to ensure health supplements, nutraceuticals comply with RDA norms

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed the food safety commissioners of all the States to ensure companies selling products such as health supplements and nutraceuticals comply with Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) norms.

Health supplements and nutraceuticals contain nutrients such as vitamins, amino acids and minerals. Food business operators need to ensure that the quantity of such nutrients in their products are in adherence with the RDA values specified by the FSSAI.

The food safety authority, in its latest order, has directed State food safety commissioners, while granting new licences, to ensure companies making nutraceuticals, health supplements and functional foods comply with the notified RDA norms. It has also asked them to review whether companies with existing licences are adhering to these norms.

RDA value scrutiny

The order comes after the food safety authority received complaints that certain products with nutrient quantities exceeding the RDA values are being sold in the market.

"It has come to the notice of the FSSAI that licence for the food products as per FSS (Food or Health Supplements, Nutraceuticals, foods for Special Dietary Use, Foods for Medical Purpose, Functional Foods and Novel Foods) Regulations, 2016, are being issued by the licensing authorities without duly scrutinising the RDA value of vitamins, minerals and amino acids in the products to be manufactured by the food business operator (FBO) that is applying for the licence," the FSSAI stated in its order.

In the order sent to State food safety commissioners, the Authority pointed out that its regulations "specify the quantity of nutrients added to food shall not exceed" the RDA, as specified by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). In case such standards are not specified for certain products, companies need to adhere to standards laid down by international food standards body Codex, it added.

"All Central as well as State licensing authorities are hereby advised to strictly implement the limitation for 'not more than one RDA' for nutrients" as specified in the FSS Act, 2006, while granting licences to FBOs, except for foods meant for special dietary uses or for special medical uses, FSSAI stated in its order.

In addition, it has advised Central and State licensing authorities to “undertake a review of RDAs mentioned by FBOs in the existing licences, issued by their office for health supplements, nutraceuticals etc, and issue notices to such manufacturers to direct them to undertake necessary modifications in compliance with the FSSA Act, 2006.”