

FSSAI to notify claim regulations on health supplements and nutraceuticals

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[Rhythma Kaul](#)



In 2016, the regulator began the process of reigning in the sale of these products by way of rules under eight categories of foods. (Representative Photo)

The government is in the process of notifying claim regulations on health supplements and nutraceuticals — a mix of nutritional and pharmaceutical products — keeping in mind global practices.

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A mere combination of vitamins and minerals formulated into tablets, capsules or syrup is not food unless vitamins and minerals are added to an article of food. "As this sector grows, we have to put stringent regulatory mechanism in place as people tend to manufacture and sell just anything in the name of health supplements," said Pawan Agarwal, chief executive officer, FSSAI.

In 2016, the regulator began the process of reigning in the sale of these products by way of rules under eight categories of foods.

The categories involved were health supplements, nutraceuticals, foods for special dietary use, food for special medical purpose, speciality food containing plants or botanicals, foods containing probiotics, foods containing prebiotics and the novel foods.

These foods are not permitted to contain hormones, steroids or psychotropic ingredients but may use approved colours and additives as permitted under the Food Safety and Standards (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011.

The quantity of nutrients added to the articles of food shall not exceed the recommended daily allowance as specified by the Indian Council of Medical Research and accepted by the FSSAI. The rules came into effect from January 1, 2018. With the market growing, the regulations have been reworked based on what other countries are following.

The FSSAI roped in The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), to establish a 'Resource Centre for Health Supplements and Nutraceuticals (ReCHaN) in partnership with International Alliance of Dietary/Food Supplement Associations (IADSA).

"Health supplement sector is very important for the country not only from the industry growth perspective but also from public health point of view... The new regulations will help the industry to grow further while at the same time safeguard consumer interest," said Agarwal.