

FSSAI notifies standards for fortification of processed food products

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Companies can fortify their products with micronutrients voluntarily

The packet of noodles, pasta or rusk that you pick up may soon come with added vitamins and minerals. After setting fortification standards for staples, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has notified norms for permissible levels of micronutrients for fortifying processed food products such as breakfast cereals, biscuits, breads, rusks, pasta, noodles, buns and fruit juices.

Companies that make such products can fortify them with micronutrients voluntarily. Also, products that are high in fat, salt and sugar will be “excluded” from the fortified processed foods category.

“Fortified Processed Foods may have fortified staples as raw materials and/or fortified with permitted micronutrients and additives as specified under the Food Safety and Standards (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulation, 2011,” stated the latest notification.

Permissible levels

The FSSAI has restricted the amount of fortification that can be added to 15-30 per cent of the average daily dietary intake levels. This has been done to ensure balanced consumption of micronutrients fortified products. “The Fortified Processed Food shall provide 15-30 per cent of the Indian adult RDA (Recommended dietary Allowance) of micronutrient, based on an average calorie intake of 600 kcal from processed foods (approximately a third of daily energy requirement for an adult),” it said.

Companies will be able to fortify the products with iron, folic acid, zinc, vitamin B12, vitamin A, among other micronutrients. The notification has defined the levels of these vitamins and

minerals per 100 gm. For instance, iron levels have been set at 1.4-1.7 mg per 100 gms of cereals.

These norms are part of the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) First Amendment Regulations, 2020, and will come into effect from July 1, 2021.

Similarly, permissible levels of nutrients such as iron, zinc, vitamin B1, vitamin B12 and vitamin B3 have been specified in the regulations for biscuits, rusks, breads and buns. "Fruit juices when fortified shall contain Vitamin C at the levels of 6-12 mg per 100 ml," the regulation added.

Already, many packaged food companies sell products such as noodles and biscuits fortified with vitamins and minerals. They will need to ensure they are in compliance with the norms by next year.

Earlier this month, the FSSAI had also released a draft notification seeking stakeholder comments on making fortification with vitamin A and vitamin D mandatory for edible oils and milk.

In 2018, FSSAI had notified standards of fortification for five staple product categories — milk, edible oil, rice, flour and salt. It has also launched the 'F+' logo to be displayed on labels of fortified food products for easy identification by consumers.