

FSSAI demands withdrawal of four foods under hypoallergenic conditions

Thursday, 06 September, 2018, 08 : 00 AM [IST]

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FSSAI has asked two companies to withdraw their products falling under special food category, from the market. They have been asked to withdraw four of their products, two each, meant for the hypoallergenic conditions, with immediate effect. The country's apex food regulator has also directed the authorised officers in states to keep a check on the sale of these products.

Based on the recommendation by the scientific panel, the products which are to be withdrawn from the list are Similac Total Comfort Optigro (from birth to 12 months), Similac Total Comfort Intellipro2 (for after six months), NAN Optipro HA 1 and NAN Optipro HA 2.

Recently, the country's apex food regulator stated that it was working on draft standards for food related to inborn errors of metabolism (IEM) for infants. It has also identified the food products that would be named in a list and shall be allowed to be imported in the country, once approved. Pawan Kumar Agarwal, chief executive officer, FSSAI, said, "Under the initiative of diet4life, the apex food regulator has allowed the import of certain foods that are required to be given to kids suffering from IEM."

IEM and hypoallergenic conditions are special medical conditions which require specialty foods, which are not readily available in the country. Although available globally, it was difficult to import them into India, due to the absence of standards for such foods. Taking note of the seriousness of these products, FSSAI has permitted import of few products.

Shweta Khandelwal, head, nutrition research, Public Health Foundation of India, said, "The reason for these four products no longer permitted for import may be because they might have shown lapses in compliance with the guidelines laid out for IEM foods by FSSAI."

"Since this is a very specific category of disorders, we must exercise utmost caution at every step right from product formulation to sales to consumption," she added.

"These products are not for general public use but for a specific type of vulnerable population. Thus, strict rules and their rigorous implementation on the part of regulators are commendable to ensure public health and safety," Khandelwal said.

Meanwhile, FSSAI has recently directed food business operators (FBOs) to discontinue the use

of 14 ingredients listed under the nutraceutical regulations with immediate effect because of the lack of data. Further, the manufacturing of products using these ingredients was to be permitted till such time as they had been assessed and approved by the Food Authority.

The ingredients that were not permitted for use were as follows: Raspberry ketone; Silica; Angelica sinensis; Paullinia cupana; Saw palmetto; Notoginseng; Chlorella Growth factor; Pine bark extracted from Pinus radiata; Pine bark extracted from Pinus pinaster; Vitamin D3 (veg), Chaga extract (Inonotus obliquus); Oxalobacter formigenes, Phytavail iron and Tea tree oil.

Now, FSSAI has clarified that since it has taken the above mentioned ingredients into consideration, it has permitted products that use the above ingredients to be available in the market, provided that they have been manufactured up to June 29, 2018 and not beyond this date. Further, these products will be allowed in the market only till the scientific panel make final decision. Therefore, FBOs must not manufacture any new products containing these ingredients after June 29, 2018.