

# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## FDA gears up to ensure mention of 'maida', 'atta' on food labels

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PUNE: Officials of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in Pune are gearing up to implement the recent directive of the food regulator mandating packaged-food companies to label refined flour as 'maida' and whole wheat as 'atta'.

"The food manufacturing companies have been told to comply with the order by April 30, 2019. It means that every food item containing the ingredient needs to clearly mention 'maida' and 'atta' from May 1 onwards," said Suresh Deshmukh, joint commissioner (food), FDA

### HOW WILL IT HELP?

**M**any consumers confuse refined wheat flour with wheat flour



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➤ The directive on labelling will help consumers make informed choices while buying such products

Elaborating, Deshmukh said, "Currently, quite a few food manufacturers in India mention

wheat flour when in reality they use refined wheat flour or maida in their products. Again, many consumers confuse refined wheat flour with wheat flour. The directive will dispel this confusion and make it clear to consumers whether they are having maida or atta.”

Dilip Sangat, assistant commissioner (food), FDA, Raigad, said, “This is aimed at bringing clarity in labelling as many packaged food companies use ‘wheat flour’ as general English nomenclature for both atta and maida on product labels.”

The move assumes significance as many companies use these nomenclatures to make health claims about their products such as atta, bread and biscuits. This directive on labelling will help consumers make informed choices while buying such products.

The issue came to the fore when FDA officials in Raigad issued notice to a popular biscuit brand’s manufacturing unit in Khopoli (Raigad district) in Maharashtra.

“The biscuit company claimed wheat flour on the label but in reality it used refined wheat flour or maida to make the biscuits. Similar other raids across the country also revealed the same pattern wherein companies cashed in on the confusion between wheat flour and refined wheat flour. The FSSAI then issued the directive to use maida and atta with English words,” Sangat said. The Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) issued the order on February 1 this year.

“It has been observed that the food business operators use ‘wheat flour’ as English nomenclature for maida on the label of food products, which does not convey the exact nature of ingredient used for manufacturing of various food items to the consumers as well as enforcement officials,” the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said in an order.

He said, “We are going to initiate drives from May 1 onwards to ensure effective implementation of the FSSAI directive for consumers’ benefit. People can also contact us if they have any complaint in this regard.”