

FSSAI establishes standards and guidance note for gluten free foods

25 June 2019 | News | By Manbeena Chawla

FSSAI intends to ensure safe food for people suffering from celiac disease.



Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has established standards for 'GLUTEN FREE FOODS' and a guidance note has been released to build awareness on the same. FSSAI intends to ensure safe food for people suffering from celiac disease.

Gluten is a protein present in cereals such as wheat, barley and rye. In 100 g of wheat, there is generally 8 g of gluten. Gluten provides special properties to the wheat flour that it forms a good dough for making breads, chapattis, pasta and other food items. Because of its unique property, gluten is used extensively in the food industry.

As per the standards established by FSSAI, one in 140 individuals has Celiac disease. It occurs in genetically predisposed individuals and is triggered by the ingestion of gluten.

Standards of 'Gluten Free Food' is notified in the Sub Regulation 2.14 of Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives), Regulations, 2011, wherein, it is mentioned that gluten levels shall be below 20 mg/kg and it shall bear the label declaration referred to in sub-regulation 2.4.5 (50) of Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011 i.e., the term "Gluten free" shall be printed in the immediate proximity of the name of the product.

FSSAI is also in the process of removing the provisions relating to the standard of "Food specially processed to reduce gluten content to a level 20-100 mg/kg" from the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011 and 'Low Gluten and warning for low gluten', respectively under Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011. Further, FSSAI is in the process of adding labelling provisions for addressing the issue of cross contamination.

'Strip based rapid test methods' are present for testing of gluten free foods. FSSAI has not so far validated these methods. Manufacturers of such kits are encouraged to apply for confirmation / approval of kit.'

According to the guidance note issued by FSSAI, patients suffering from celiac disease should check ingredients details on the label before buying any packaged food products since it may contain gluten e.g., (Instant Noodles, Macaroni, Pasta, Bread, Compounded asafoetida or Bandhani Hing etc.)