

FSSAI reduces trans fat levels in food from 5% to 3%

The long-pending demand of experts to reduce the level of trans fats in food items has been met, with India's top food regulator Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) reducing it to 3%. The current permissible limit is 5%.

India is committed to the elimination of industrial trans fats in fats/oils, and in foods containing fats/oils in a phased manner. The trans fat content in fats and oils has already been limited to 5%, and the notification to further reduce it to 3% by 2021, and to 2% by 2022 is under process. The regulation is also being extended to food products having fats or oils," said the FSSAI draft notification that has been in the works for a couple of years.

The regulator, on December 29, brought out a gazette notification that the level of trans fats in oils and fats will not be more than 3% from January 1, 2021 onwards. The level shall be further reduced to 2% by January 1, 2022 onwards.

Industrial trans fats are largely present in partially hydrogenated fats such as margarine, and bakery shortenings used in preparation of bakery products, and in vanaspati that is used to prepare sweets and deep fried items.

An estimated 540,000 people die each year globally of cardiovascular diseases, and consumption of food laced with industrial trans fats is a contributing factor. In India, the number of deaths is around 60,000, according to government data.