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FSSAI may ban harmful food additives after probe

Keeping in mind the safety of people, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is evaluating 11,000 food additives to draw up a list of harmful ones that will be banned for use in India.

Potassium bromate and potassium iodate, which was found in high quantity in various ready-to-eat breads by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) study, are also under consideration.

“Looking at its serious sideeffects, we specifically had decided to ban potassium bromate for use as a food additive. We have informed the health ministry and there should be a notification in this regard soon,” said CEO, FSSAI, Pawan Agrawal.

“We are collecting data on potassium iodate but our experts feel there is need to collect more scientific data on this chemical before banning it from the list of permissible additives,” he said.

CSE on Monday released a report claiming nearly 84% of 38 commonly available brands of pre-packaged breads, including pav and buns, tested positive for potassium bromate and potassium iodate.

The chemicals are banned in many countries as are listed as hazardous for public health.

Union health minister JP Nadda has ordered a probe into the matter. “We have sought a report from FSSAI, we will take appropriate action as soon as we get the report,” said Nadda.

Potassium bromate typically increases dough strength, leads to higher rising and uniform finish to baked products, while potassium iodate is a flour treatment agent.
