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Give us this day, our potassium-free bread



Bread manufacturers' body to stop using potassium bromate, potassium iodate within three days

Facing allegations about the presence of carcinogenic chemicals in their products, the All India Bread Manufacturers' Association (AIBMA), which represents over 90 organised bread manufacturers, has asked the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to verify the findings of a Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) report.

“The FSSAI has already announced a ban on use of potassium bromate and will issue a notification within six-seven days. Hence, we have decided to stop using potassium bromate and potassium iodate voluntarily,” AIBMA president Ramesh Mago stated during a press conference held in the Capital on Thursday.

Move welcomed

Welcoming the announcement made by the AIBMA in response to the CSE's latest study, which had pointed to the widespread use and presence of potassium bromate and iodate residues in bread, CSE deputy director general Chandra Bhushan said: "We are happy that AIBMA has decided to stop using potassium bromate and potassium iodate within two-three days. This will reduce public health risk from these chemicals."

CSE researchers had pointed out that potassium bromate can possibly cause cancer and the use of potassium iodate in bread-making can lead to excess intake of iodine, which could affect thyroid function.

Meanwhile, the All India Institute of Medical Science director M.C. Misra said there is no need to panic about the presence of potassium bromate and potassium iodate in pre-packaged daily bread.

Speaking at a conference on "Health Security for All" organised by ASSOCHAM, Dr. Misra said: "It might pose some danger, but no individual eats an entire pack of bread everyday. A majority of people eat a slice or two at the most. So there is no need to panic much."

He added that use of chemical additives in food items should be minimised and replaced with fresh food items like eggs, fruits, vegetables and other alternatives, besides the fact that one should eat everything in a moderate quantity.

"There should be no adulteration in food items. And if it is present, it should be mentioned about on the packet," Dr. Misra added.
