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FSSAI to allow import of food for special medical purposes

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is working on a mechanism to allow imports of products for consumers, especially children, who suffer from IEM (inborn errors of metabolism) disorders. This will be done through a special import notification in a bid to meet the nutritional needs of children who suffer from metabolism disorders.

As part of its “Diet4Life initiative”, the regulator will facilitate the import of Food for Special Medical Purposes (FSMP) products soon. These products are made by companies such as Nestle, Danone and Abbott.

These disorders, which impact a small section of consumers, especially babies, occur due to single gene defect leading to abnormalities in the synthesis of proteins, carbohydrates and fats. The regulator has identified 15 IEM conditions under this project.

Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, said that the regulator is taking speedy action to create a platform and allow imports of such products in collaborations with companies and health professionals. Under this project, four leading hospitals have been identified and the regulator is collaborating with doctors and dieticians to train them to be able to prescribe these products since diagnosis of these disorders is difficult.

“Companies have also agreed to offer some of these products at subsidised rates for the next two years especially for poor patients. We are in the process of finalising this mechanism that will allow patients suffering from IEM disorders to have access to these products and this will pave the way for saving thousands of lives,” he added.

Under this programme, the food regulator will also collaborate with other partners to conduct workshops to train health professionals from across the country, so they

can diagnose these disorders during preliminary check-up stage and refer them for screening.
