

# FSSAI's Guidance Note "Safe Ground Spices" Aims At Ensuring Purchase Of Unadulterated Spices

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued a guidance note that guides consumers on how to avoid purchasing adulterated products, spices in particular. Safe Ground Spices – as the notice is named, tells consumers how to ensure that spices are not adulterated and contains key points which must be kept in mind while buying spices.

## THE HOW-TO'S

They include avoiding the purchase of powdered spices in the loose form i.e. the unbranded varieties which have already been banned by the FSSAI on account of the high probability of adulteration; checking if the ground spices have the AGMARK logo and certification, checking for the FSSAI license number on the package's label, etc.

Ground spices are commonly adulterated with substances like **artificial colors, starch, chalk powder, etc.**, in order to increase their weight and enhance their appearance. The consumption of such adulterated spices can cause a number of diseases, including skin allergies and liver disorders to start with.



The notice instructs consumers to purchase whole spices as opposing to powders since they have a lesser chance of being adulterated and to look for the FSSAI's organic logo – Jaivik Bharat – on the pack of organic spices.

The note also instructs the ways to detect adulteration in ground spices at home and how and whom to report the sale of ground spices in loose forms and adulteration.

“It is **important to control adulteration in spices**, but the bulk of the spices is sold in the open as non-packaged products, and it is elitism to insist that all consumers should buy only packaged spices,” an official from LocalCircles, a social media platform connecting organizations and the community, told the publication. “When the corporate sector makes a policy for regulators, such oversight is natural. That is why such policies will not help in removing adulteration. These rules are basically built to push consumers towards the expensive option, i.e. packaged products,” he added.

“This does not only have an adverse effect on prices but also on trade and jobs, especially small and medium enterprises that dominate spice trade. It is important that policies are made taking into account how the Indian market functions and how the spice trade is conducted, instead of letting it be dictated by a lobby,” the official said.

# NEED FOR COLLOQUIALISM

“This note is definitely going to help the consumer to get good-quality spices without any adulteration. The only worries will be for those who are not literate. So in my opinion, it should be prepared using colloquialisms in every language,” FnB News reported Usha Sisodia, dietitian, Nanavati Super Speciality Hospital, as saying.

“The apex regulator should also consider preparing a brief advertising note for television, using social networking sites such as Facebook, and arranging common education programmes at various public places,” Sisodia added. “Adulteration of spices cannot be easily stopped. It can directly affect the business of many people. So the government should impose hefty fines on those who prove to be culprits.”