

## Staple food set to be fortified from 2019

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The manufacturers of milk and oil products were trained on Sunday and the other sectors are to be covered later.

**Hyderabad:** Compulsory fortification will be enforced from January to provide micronutrients to people. Five staple foods wheat flour, oil, milk, rice and salt will be fortified to tackle the deficiency of micronutrients.

The deficiency of iron, folic acid, vitamin A and D is very high in India and fortification of essential commodities with micronutrients has been made mandatory.

Nutritionist Janaki Srinath explained, "There was a consensus that once the economic condition of the population improves. The deficiencies will be tackled effectively. But that has not been so. Data from several studies and from the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) continued to show deficiency in micronutrients among the population."

She said the Central government wanted to carry out the fortification of five foods which were consumed by the people across states.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) along with the Institute of Preventive Medicine have insisted that manufacturers must carry out the process of fortification. The manufacturers of milk and oil products were trained on Sunday and the other sectors are to be covered later.

Mr Guru Raj Patil, deputy director, Karnataka Health Promotion Trust, who is overseeing the process in eight states, explained said the fortified foods will have Plus F logo and this will have to be monitored by the state food control agencies. "There are guidelines on the fortification process and these are internationally certified as safe," he said.

Awareness has to be created among the people as those who have adequate micronutrients in their foods must not opt for them.

Hence reading the label and checking for the logo will be very important for the consumers.

At the consumer level awareness has to be carried out as to who requires fortified foods and who does not. The government officials insist that fortification is within safe limits only but those who are adequate will not require it.