



March Month

INITIATIVE OF THE MONTH: CHOOSE FORTIFIED FOODS WITH +F LOGO

INITIATIVE LED BY



# Give Yourself the Power of +F!



**FORTIFIED**  
SAMPOORNA POSHAN  
SWASTH JEEVAN

**A**re you sure you're getting all the essential vitamins and minerals you need for your health and wellbeing? You would be surprised to know that over half of women and children suffer from anaemia. One of the main causes is the deficiency of iron, an important mineral required to produce blood in the body. Similarly, the majority of us, without even realizing it, have deficiency of Vitamin D, which is essential for bone health. The body uses sunshine to produce Vitamin D but given our increasingly sedentary lifestyles, we hardly get enough sunshine in the day.

Deficiency of vitamins and minerals often remain unnoticed but its consequences are devastating and in many cases permanent. For example, deficiency of key micronutrients- vitamins and minerals- like iodine in pregnant women and children can lead to mental and physical retardation among children, poor performance in school and subsequently poor economic outcomes. The worst part is that this affects people from all walks of life and sections of the society.

Ideally, we should get all our nutrients from our daily diet. This requires that we eat a balanced diet that is varied and includes all food groups in the right quantity so as to get all the nutrients. However, this is not always possible given our food choices, individual

preferences, habits, fast-paced lifestyles, lack of awareness on nutrition as well as availability of nutritious food. Therefore, many of us are deprived of essential micronutrients in our daily diets. This is known as 'hidden hunger' because even though we may be eating enough quantity of food, we may not be getting all the nutrients required.

So what is the solution to this problem that affects a large number of people in our country? What if the food you ate everyday such as rice or wheat flour had added vitamins and minerals to make them more nutritious? What if these foods supplied at least a part of your daily requirement of micronutrients? Wouldn't this help reduce deficiencies without changing your food habits or cooking practices? Well, this solution exists and is known as 'food fortification'.

Food fortification is the process of adding key vitamins and minerals to staple food items that are consumed widely and regularly. These nutrients are either not present in the food originally or get lost during processing. Therefore, they are added to staple foods in small but adequate quantities to improve their nutrient content. The best part of food fortification is that it does not change the original taste, texture, appearance or method of cooking and costs very little compared to the health benefits it provides. While eating a balanced diet

is the best solution for getting all the nutrients we need, food fortification certainly helps to improve our nutrition profile in a simple and easy way, even if it cannot completely eradicate deficiency diseases.

Many countries have fortified foods items such as sugar, wheat flour, salt since the past 100 years. Even in India, salt has been fortified with iodine for the past 60 years, which has reduced iodine-related disorders such as goitre. Now, five staples are being fortified in India for which standards have been notified by FSSAI as to the quantity of the micronutrient to be added based on scientific data. Lower and upper limits have been defined such that 30-50% of the daily requirements of these micronutrients are met. At the same time, the upper limit ensures that we do not receive these micronutrients in excessive amounts, thus making them safe for consumption. Rice and wheat flour are fortified with iron, folic acid, and vitamin B12. Salt is fortified with iron and iodine. Edible oil and milk are fortified with vitamins A and D.

How would you know how to identify fortified foods in the market? For this, FSSAI has come out with the '+F' logo for foods fortified as per standards by FSSAI. This +F logo gives instant recognisability and indicates which micronutrients have

been added. It also assures the consumer that the micronutrients have been added in the right quantity, thus making these foods safe for consumption.

How do we ensure that each and every one of us has access to fortified foods? The Government has taken several steps towards this. Food for-

tification has been identified as one of the six key strategies for anaemia prevention by the Government's flagship programme- Anaemia Mukht Bharat. Ministries of Women and Child Development, Human Resource Development and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution have issued directives to

include fortified foods in safety net programmes namely Integrated Child Development Services, Mid-Day Meal and Public Distribution Scheme respectively. Last but not the least, FSSAI has set up a dedicated Resource Centre to promote and facilitate food fortification in States & UTs as well as the open market.



### RICE & WHEAT FLOUR:

To prevent Anaemia

IRON

VITAMIN B 12

FOLIC ACID



### OIL & MILK:

For strong bones and eye health

VITAMIN A

VITAMIN D



### DOUBLE FORTIFIED SALT:

To prevent anemia and promote normal growth and brain development and thyroid function

IODINE

IRON

*You, as a 'smart food consumer' can promote fortified foods with the +F logo and do your bit. You will not only improve your health but also of your loved ones.*

## CELEBRITIES SPEAK



Sakshi Tanwar

Endorsing the Eat Right India Movement, Sakshi Tanwar urges citizens to take charge of their health

*"Take responsibility of your health and diet. Just remember to read the +F sign whenever you pick up atta, rice, oil, milk and salt. So I will come and ask you Dekhs Kya, +F?"*

## EXPERT'S SPEAK



Dr. Shikha Sharma

*Fortified foods contain added vitamins and minerals such as iron, Vitamin A and D, iodine that are critical for our health and well-being. Fortified foods help meet our daily requirement of these micronutrients and help prevent diseases like anemia, night blindness, goitre and so on.*



Chef Ranveer Brar

*I always use fortified foods to cook my recipes. There is no difference in colour, taste, texture, flavour and cooking methods. The difference is in the health benefits.*