



FICCI GUIDELINES FOR CONSUMERS OF PROCESSED FOODS



OCTOBER 2024

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
Federation House, Tansen Marg, New Delhi 110001



ABOUT FICCI



Established in 1927, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India, headquartered in the national capital New Delhi. The history is closely interwoven with India's struggle for independence and its subsequent emergence as one of the most rapidly growing economies globally. It was founded by GD Birla and Purushottam Takkur in 1927, on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi.

A non-government, not-for-profit organisation, FICCI is the voice of India's business and industry. It plays a leading role in policy debates that are at the forefront of social, economic, and political change. It works with its key stakeholders to foster active engagement and dialogue with decision makers, to support steps that are good for commerce and industry.

As a member-led and member-driven organisation, FICCI represents over 2,50,000 companies across all segments of economy including public, private and multinationals. The diverse membership base of FICCI across all Indian states includes both direct and indirect members through its 300 affiliated regional and state level industry associations. FICCI has a large international presence via partner agreements with 250 national business associations in over 100 countries. Partnerships with countries across the world carry forward our initiatives in inclusive development, which encompass health, education, livelihood, governance, skill development, etc.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



The creation of the "FICCI Guidelines for Consumers of Processed Foods 2024" has been a collaborative effort, made possible by the invaluable contributions of various stakeholders. We are profoundly grateful to the following individuals and organizations for their unwavering support:

We sincerely thank **Shri G. Kamala Vardhana Rao, IAS, CEO, FSSAI**, for his support and guidance. His leadership at FSSAI has been instrumental in ensuring that these guidelines align with the highest standards of food safety and consumer protection.

Our appreciation goes to the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)**, for their commitment in creating an ecosystem where food processing is essential in making nutritious and safe foods more accessible to all.

A special thanks to **Dr. B. Sesikeran, Former Director, ICMR-NIN**, whose visionary thinking sparked the initial idea for these guidelines. We also deeply appreciate the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) for its pioneering work in the field of nutrition. Additionally, we acknowledge the invaluable contributions of both national and international academic partners, whose research and expertise have provided the scientific foundation for these guidelines.

Finally, we extend our sincere gratitude to the representatives of the **Food Processing Industry**. Their collaboration and openness to engage in meaningful dialogue ensured that these guidelines are both practical and aligned with industry realities. Their role in fostering transparency and promoting consumer education has been vital to the success of this initiative.

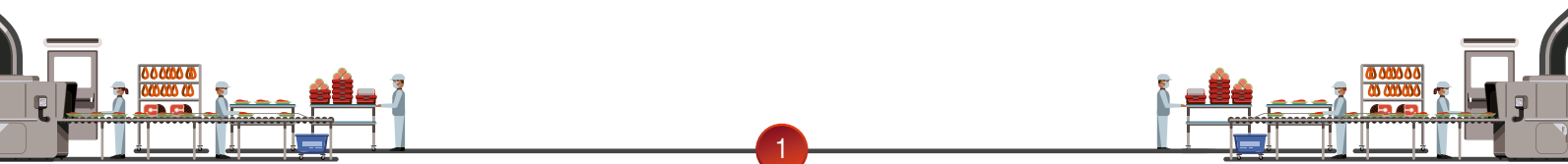
Together, we have crafted a resource that empowers consumers to make informed decisions in an evolving food landscape. We are confident these guidelines will have a lasting positive impact on public health and nutrition nationwide.



CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Message	02
Foreword	03
Purpose of the Guidelines	04
7 Guiding Principles for Consumers	05
Introduction	06
What do Food Labels Mean?	08
Understanding Nutrients	13
> Energy Requirement of all Ages	13
> Carbohydrates, Total Sugars, Added Sugars	14
> Total Fat, Saturated Fat, Trans Fat	15
> Sodium and Salt Relationship	16
> Protein	17
> Dietary Fiber	17
Claims Made on Package	18
Role of Food Additives in Modern Food Production	20
Display of Information in Food Service Establishments	21
Understanding Satiety and Food Combinations	22
> Food Satiety and Combinations	22
> Snacking between Meals	22
Cultural and Occasional Treats/Foods	24
Digital Food Delivery Platforms	25
Importance of Maintaining Health and Regular Physical Activity	26
Conclusion	28
References	29





Jyoti Vij
Director General



**Federation of
Indian Chambers
of Commerce and Industry**

Federation House
Tansen Marg
New Delhi 110001
T + 91 112348 7257
F +91 11 2332 0714
E jyoti.vij@ficci.com
www.ficci.in
CIN: U99999DL1956NPL002635
ISO 9001:2015 Certified

MESSAGE

As we navigate through the complexities of the contemporary food environment, the significance of informed and conscious consumption has become increasingly critical. The 'FICCI Guidelines for Consumers of Processed Foods 2024' reflect our firm commitment to provide consumers the essential knowledge to make informed food choices. These guidelines have been meticulously developed for easy understanding of processed food consumption, offering clear and comprehensive insights for all consumers.

At FICCI, we believe that public health is a shared responsibility, and it is our privilege to contribute to this vital dialogue surrounding the informed consumption of processed foods. We expect that these guidelines will serve as a valuable resource for individuals, families, communities and food manufacturers as they strive for better health and well-being.

I extend my sincere thanks to the experts, regulators, and stakeholders who have contributed to this invaluable resource. I also thank our industry members for their support in championing this idea and helping bring it to life. I hope that these guidelines serve as a guide for consumers across India, leading them towards healthier eating habits and a more sustainable relationship with food.

Ms. Jyoti Vij

Director General, FICCI

जी. कमलावर्धन राव
G. Kamala Vardhana Rao
मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी
Chief Executive Officer



Foreword

It is with immense pleasure that I acknowledge the initiative that FICCI has undertaken in developing "FICCI Guidelines for Consumers of Processed Foods 2024." In today's rapidly evolving food landscape, where convenience and variety often challenge our ability to make informed choices, this resource stands as an invaluable guide to understand key aspects of processed foods. These guidelines not only empowers the consumers to make healthier food decisions but also ensures they have a clear understanding of the nutritional content and other aspects associated with processed foods. This initiative represents a significant step towards enhancing overall consumer well-being and promoting transparency in the food industry.

At the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), we are steadfast in our commitment to advancing consumer education. These guidelines mark a pivotal step in that direction as they are crafted in a user-friendly format to help consumers accurately interpret food labels, comprehend the significance of various nutrients, and navigate the complexities of modern food production and consumption.

The development of these guidelines also reflects a crucial effort towards achieving better public health outcomes. By advocating for mindful consumption, balanced diets, portion control, and regular physical activity, these guidelines align with national priorities on health and nutrition. They serve as a practical tool for consumers to navigate the vast array of modern food options, ensuring that their choices contribute to long-term health and well-being.

The FSSAI is proud to support this initiative, as it resonates with our mission to ensure the availability of safe and wholesome food for all. I am confident that these guidelines will serve as a valuable resource for consumers, helping them navigate the complexities of modern food consumption and contribute positively to their overall health and well-being. I congratulate FICCI for their dedicated efforts and look forward to witnessing the positive impact these guidelines will have across the nation.

Let us continue to work together towards a healthier, more informed society.

G. Kamala Vardhana Rao, IAS
CEO, FSSAI

एफडीए भवन, कोटला भवन, नई दिल्ली - 110002, दूरभाष - 011-23220995 / 996
FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, New Delhi - 110002, Tel- 011-23220995/ 996
E-mail: ceo@fssai.gov.in, www.fssai.gov.in



Purpose of the Guidelines

As the pace of modern life accelerates, there is increased consumption of convenient foods and clearly, there is a need to educate consumers about such foods. These guidelines will help consumers make informed decisions while appreciating the convenience, safety and variety that these foods can offer.

These consumer guidelines are aimed at providing accurate and relevant information about processed foods that have become a part of our daily needs. These guidelines not only include packaged foods but all types of processed foods. These comprehensive guidelines are designed to enhance the understanding of processed food, food labels, significance of essential nutrients, and ways and means to pursue a right diet regime while maintaining balance between health, well-being and occasional treats.

These guidelines will also be helpful to food regulators, academia, scientific experts, and relevant stakeholders to recognize and appreciate the relevance of food processing in our modern life, quality of diet, consumption patterns, and the overall agri-food ecosystem.

7 Guiding Principles for Consumers

Moderation is the key

A generic approach for mindful consumption is to eat foods in moderation. This could fulfil the needs and desires of a consumer in a reasonable manner whilst preventing them from consuming food in excess. Preventing excess consumption will further help in maintaining the health goals of an individual.

Be mindful of portion sizes

Besides moderation, it is crucial for an individual to understand dietary habits and patterns which suit their body and lifestyle. Consumers are encouraged to understand their needs and know their portion sizes. The best way is to consume as per the servings indicated on the package.

Balance your diet

Eating a variety of foods provide diversity in diet and reduces the risk of becoming deficient in any particular nutrient. Food combinations provide variety, flavour enrichment and ensures balanced intake of essential macro and micronutrients.

Stay hydrated

Drinking water is the major solution towards preventing many health related problems including digestion related issues, sleep disorder, stress, etc. Therefore, it is important to ensure that adequate quantity of water is consumed to stay hydrated throughout the day.

Read labels carefully

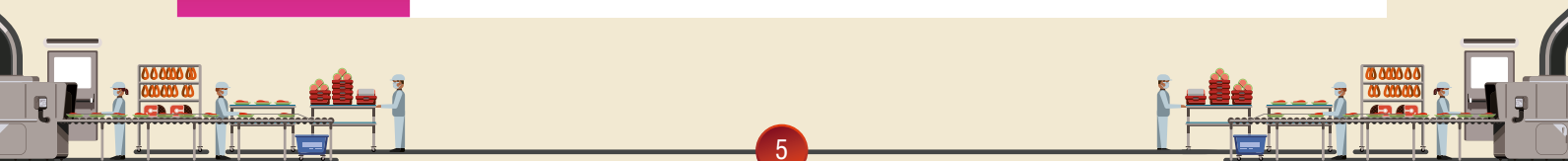
Reading labels is a must to understand the content in the packaged foods you intend to consume and the choices you are making. It is crucial to pay specific attention to the List of Ingredients, Nutritional Information and Serve Size provided on the food label.

Always check for allergens

Consumers with any kind of food linked allergy or sensitivity should carefully read food package labels for specific allergen declaration to avoid accidental intake of allergens.

Regular Physical Activity

Regular exercise, yoga and sports activity offer numerous benefits for both physical and mental health and without these, diet alone may not be of much help. Regular physical activity will also help reduce stress, maintain a healthy weight, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.



Introduction

The Consumer Protection Act of 2019 defines a consumer as someone who buys a product or service for a consideration, either for personal use or to earn a living. On the other hand, when the purpose of 'consumer' is narrowed down to food industry, the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006¹ accurately defines it as persons and families purchasing and receiving food in order to meet their personal needs.

The consumer is at the core of the food industry and, also forms the most important segment of any industry. The preferences and contentment of the consumer is crucial for determining how well a product meets the consumer expectation. To meet these demands, processed food industry is continuously evolving and innovating to improve with changing lifestyle and food choices of the consumer.

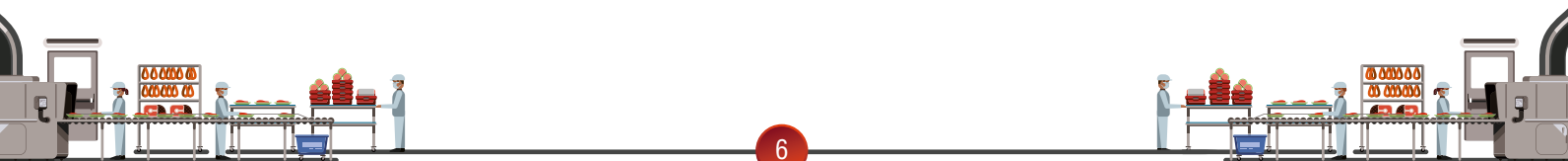
Why is Food Processed?

Contrary to modern day perceptions about processed food, almost all food is processed in some way before it is eaten because most foods cannot be eaten without some kind of processing. Simply grinding and cooking a food with multiple ingredients to create a recipe is also a form of food processing.

Food processing involves a manufacturing process of any raw material from agriculture, animal husbandry or fisheries and it is transformed in such a way that its original physical properties may undergo a change, and the transformed product is edible and has commercial value². It may have significant value addition (increased nutritional value, improved shelf life etc.) and may also include products that are minimally processed.

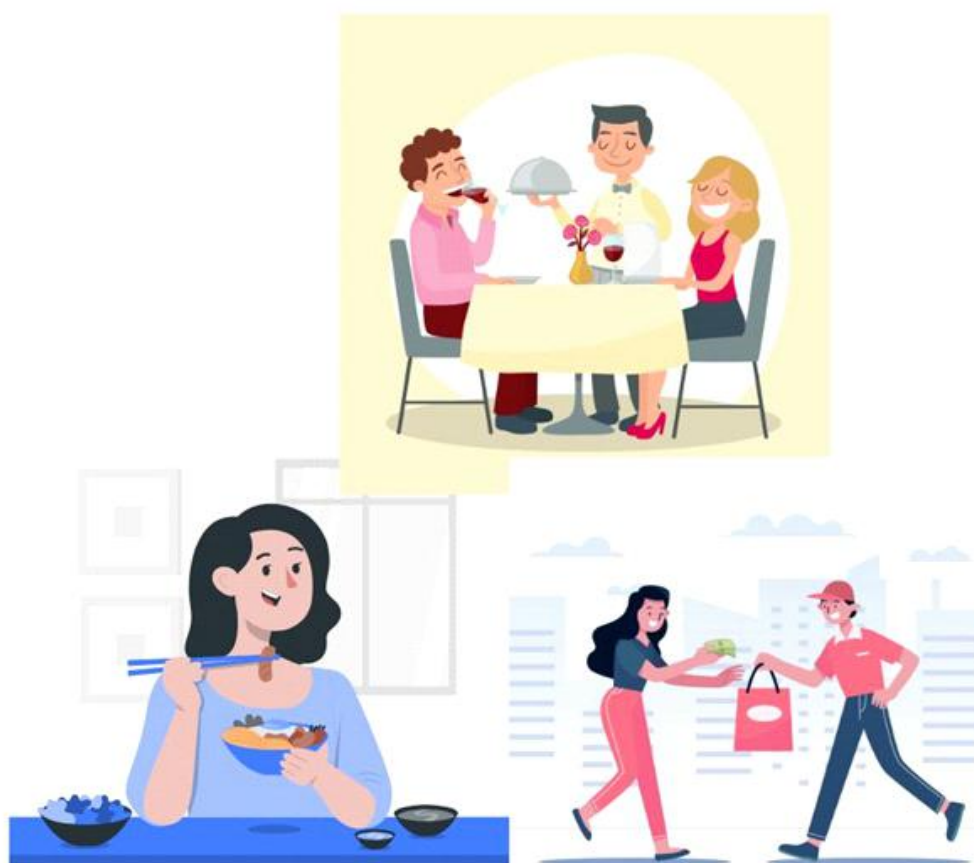
Therefore, food processing is essential for improving food security, decreasing food waste, and guaranteeing that a large number of people have access to nutritious and safe food.

In addition to dietary and nutrition attributes, the food processing industry also provides numerous employment opportunities, supporting the livelihood of millions of people in India most importantly farmers. It also plays a crucial role in boosting exports, as processed foods have huge demand in international markets. The importance of food processing cannot be overstated, as it is a key factor in achieving self-sufficiency and sustainability in the food sector. It offers the following additional key advantages:



- **Convenience:** Creating easy-to-prepare or ready-to-eat products, especially for people leading fast paced life, have less time to prepare food and looking for convenient options.
- **Variety:** Providing distinct options and variety to choose from.
- **Readily available:** Ready to make options like premixes enable consumers to prepare food at their own convenience and taste
- **Catering to special dietary needs:** Constant innovation in this sector is helping to make large number of products are available for feeding specific dietary needs and preferences of the consumer.
- **Fortified foods:** Fortified foods are readily available to meet the requirements of one or more nutrients which otherwise may be deficient in certain segments of population.
- **Availability throughout the year:** Food processing allows the availability of seasonal fruit and vegetable products throughout the year.

Food processing can take place at home, out-of-home (for example in restaurants and cafeterias), and at an industrial scale. Hence, majority of the foods people eat in their day-to-day lives are processed to certain extent.



What do Food Labels Mean?



Understanding Food Labels

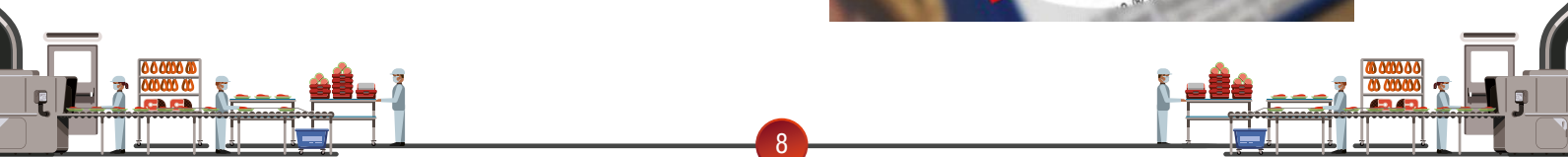
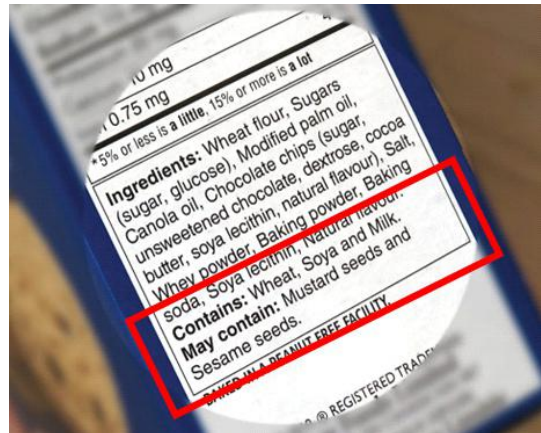
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is the primary body which regulates the compliance of food labels in India. The Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020³ prescribe the labelling requirements of pre-packaged foods. A set of mandatory as well as additional information is often seen on a food label.

FSSAI has provided a number of mandatory information that is required on the label. Further, the regulatory body also provides various conditional exemptions for carrying mandatory information on the package.

Look for Information on Label

The Name of Food: Every food package must carry the name of food, that indicates the true nature of product. Additionally, the package may also carry any brand name, trade name, etc. as required by the organization.

List of Ingredients: A complete list of all ingredients that go into the food must be mentioned on the label in decreasing order of their composition. Further, the ingoing percentage of an ingredient shall also be disclosed where the ingredients are emphasized as present on the label through words or pictures or graphics.



Allergen Declaration: It talks about the presence of allergen in food products. It is crucial for consumers who have food allergies or sensitivity to a particular ingredient. eg. nuts, soybean, etc.

Nutritional Information: It is a mandatory requirement to provide the nutritional information on all pre-packaged foods, with some exemptions including alcoholic beverages, salt, single ingredient foods, waters for human consumption, etc. More details about nutritional information are explained later in these guidelines.

Declaration regarding Food Additives: Either functional class with specific name or INS numbers for additives must be mentioned in the ingredient list.

What is an International Numbering System (INS) number? Each additive has been assigned a unique INS number through which consumers can identify the nature of additive present in food⁴.

Name and Complete Address of the Brand Owner: The label should clearly state the name and address of the company to which the food product belongs. It includes manufacturer, marketer or packer of food products on case to case basis.

Name and Complete Address of the Importer: to be given in case of imported foods. Further, the name of the country of origin shall also be mentioned on the label if the food article is imported from another country.

FSSAI Logo and License Number: for brand owner is mandatory. Further, the license number of manufacturer, marketer or packer shall also be mentioned on the label in case they are different from the brand owner.

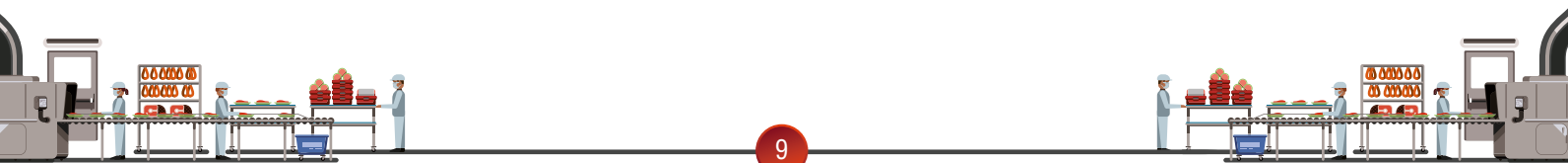
Lot/Code/Batch Identification: This is necessary for tracking the products, usually available with a prefix like Batch No. or B. No. or L. No., etc.

Instructions for Use: Instructions related to handling and storage, method of preparation or cooking is given wherever required.

Net Quantity: Net Quantity is usually expressed in terms of weight (g, kg, etc.), volume (ml, L, etc.) or number.

Best Before Date: Signifies the period up to which the food will last before losing its quality characteristics. It is important to note that even after the best before date, the food may still be safe for consumption but might not taste or look that appealing.

Use By or Expiry Date: Means the date which signifies the end of the period, after which the product may not remain safe and probably will not have the quality of safety attributes normally expected by the consumers and the food, shall not be sold, or distributed for human consumption.



MRP: 'Maximum Retail Price' is the maximum price at which the food commodity in packaged form may be sold to the consumer inclusive of all taxes.

USP: 'Unit Sale Price' means the sale price (inclusive of all taxes) for a single unit as specified in terms of weight, measure, or number. The declaration of USP is not required in cases where the MRP is equal to the amount of USP. For example, single serve packs, etc.

USP helps consumer to compare between products and save money by making it easier for them to choose what is best suited for them.

Consumer Care Information: Every package shall bear the name, address, telephone number, e-mail address of the person who can be or the office which can be contacted, in case of consumer complaints.

Look out for these logos!



FSSAI – FSSAI logo is accompanied by a registration or license number that indicates that the manufacturer has statutory permission to manufacture this product.

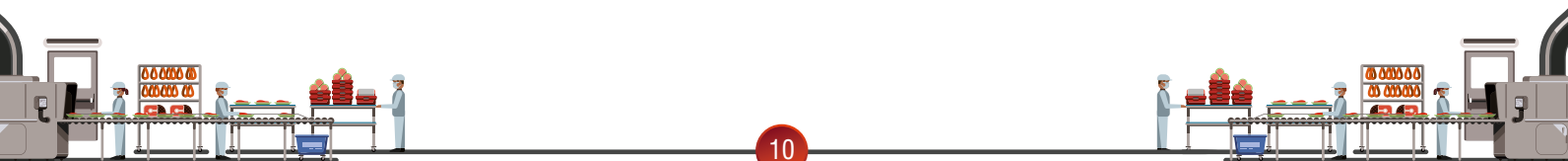


Veg logo – This green coloured logo represents a vegetarian food indicating that all ingredients including additives and processing aids are of plant origin. Such products do not contain any animal origin excipient.



Non-veg logo – This brown coloured logo indicates that one or more of the ingredients, additives or processing aids are of animal origin (except milk). Such products are non-vegetarian foods.

Note: The veg and non-veg logos are not applicable for mineral water, packaged drinking water, carbonated water, alcoholic beverages, liquid milk, milk powders and honey.



Other logos to look out for:



Indian Standards Institute (ISI) mark – Instituted by the Bureau of Indian Standards. As per current practices, certain food items are covered under mandatory ISI certification. However, companies can also decide to take voluntary ISI certification. You can find this mark on follow-up formula, processed and milk cereal based complementary foods, milk powder, condensed milk, skimmed milk powder, packaged drinking and natural mineral water, infant milk substitutes, and food for special medical purpose intended for infants.



Agricultural mark or AGMARK – AGMARK is a certification mark that ensures the quality of 222 agricultural commodities till date including fruits, vegetables, cereals, pulses, oilseeds, vegetable oils, ghee, spices, honey, creamery butter, wheat, atta, besan, etc.



जैविक भारत

Jaivik Bharat - Jaivik Bharat is a certification mark for organic foods. Every package of certified organic food as per Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulation, 2017 shall carry this logo⁵.



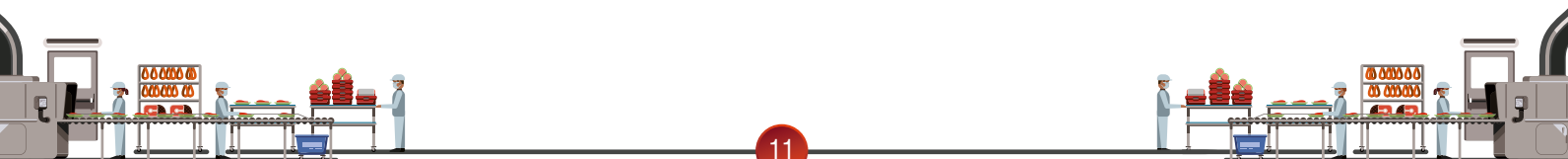
VEGAN

Vegan – The vegan logo is used for products that are not products of animal origin (including milk and milk products, honey etc.). The manufacturer may use this logo on the product only after getting approval from the food authority.



Fortification – The addition of vitamins and minerals is permitted across various foods; however, fortification is usually done with a purpose to improve the nutritional quality of food and to provide public health benefit with minimal risk to health. In simple terms, it involves deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients in a food as per the requirements laid down in the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018⁶. Further, few categories of products may also carry the +F logo on labels when specific guidelines laid down by FSSAI are followed.

Fortified Processed Foods – means processed foods that have undergone the process of fortification as per the provisions of these regulations. These include oil, milk, salt, atta, maida, milk powder, rice, cereal products, bakery wares, and fruit juices. Further, the iodization of salt is mandatory as per the regulations therefore this logo is not required for such salt packages.





Irradiation - Any food that has undergone the process of irradiation shall bear the 'Radura' logo in green colour and shall carry the specific declaration on the label as mentioned in the FSSAI regulations.

What is FOPNL?



Front-of-Pack Nutrition Labelling or FOPNL is a form of supplementary nutrition information that presents simplified nutrition information on the front-of-pack (FOP) of pre-packaged foods. It can include symbols/graphics, text or a combination thereof that provide information on the overall nutritional value of the food and/or on nutrients included in the FOPNL.

As of now, FOPNL is not a regulatory requirement in India, however as an alternate, few companies voluntarily provide a Guidance Daily Amount (GDA) declaration on food packages for energy and few other nutrients on per serve basis. This helps consumers to understand how much of each critical nutrients and what percentage of their daily needs they are likely to consume from each serve of a particular product.





Understanding Nutrients



'**Nutritional Information**' or 'NI' forms the most important part of food labelling. It is necessary to provide clear information on nutrient content of the food and thus enable consumers to make informed food choices.

Recommended Dietary Allowance or RDA⁷ refers to the quantity of each nutrient that is generally required to be taken by a healthy individual on a daily basis. The values are provided separately for individuals at different stages of life like infants, adolescence, adult, aged etc. separately for men and women at each stage because the nutritional requirements for men and women vary widely at every stage of life cycle.

Nutrition information panel shall include the values of nutrients per 100 gram (g) or 100 millilitre (ml) of the food. In case the package is a single serve pack then values may also be provided for the particular quantity contained in that pack.

NUTRITION FACTS

Serving size 45g [#]	Qty Per 100g	Qty Per 45g	% RDA* Per Serve
Energy (kcal)	344	155	8
Protein (g)	22	10	22
Carbohydrate (g)	66	30	23
Total Sugars (g)	0	0.0	0.0
Added Sugars (g)	0	0.0	0.0
Total Dietary Fibre (g)	11	5	12
Total Fat (g)	1.5	0.7	1
Saturated Fat (g)	0.1	0.06	0.3
Trans Fat (g)	0	0.0	0.0
Cholesterol (mg)	0	0.0	-
Sodium (mg)	54	24	1.2

Serve Size or Serving Size means an amount of food that is typically consumed by a person at one time. Additionally, the serve can be given in terms of common household items like teaspoon, tablespoon, cup that is appropriate to the food.

Percent RDA per serve is a mandatory requirement to be mentioned on label. The table must specify the percent contribution of each nutrient in the food to their respective Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA).

Energy Requirement of all Ages

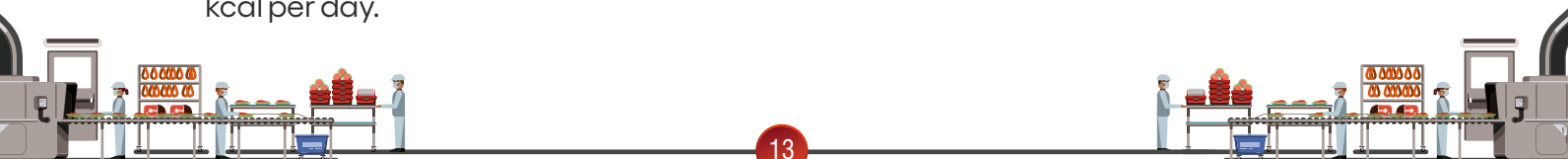
Energy is an indication of total amount of calories present in a food product. The energy content usually come from carbohydrates, fats and proteins and is measured in kilocalories (kcal) or calories (cal).

Each nutrient provides specific amount of calories per gram:

- Carbohydrates and Proteins - 4 kcal per gram
- Fats - 9 kcal per gram

As per Food Safety and Standards Regulations (FSSR), percent RDA is calculated based on an estimated value of 2000 kcal energy for an adult. The energy requirements differ based on weight, gender, physical activity, and stages of life cycle including childhood, adolescence, pregnancy, lactation, etc.

For example, the energy requirement for a pregnant women is increased by 350 kcal per day.



Here are some points that you must know about energy:

- Energy maintains the body temperature and supports physical activity and growth of a person.
- Maintaining energy balance is important. Consumers should ensure that the amount of energy they take, should be compensated by means of diet or physical activity.
- If energy intake is more than the output, then it may lead to overweight or obesity.
- Therefore, it is encouraged to keep a count of your calories and opt for regular workout to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Carbohydrates, Total Sugars, Added Sugars

Carbohydrates are the major source of energy. These can be obtained from sugars, cereals (rice, wheat, maize), millets (sorghum), pulses, legumes, roots and tubers (potatoes) etc.

Added Sugars: All types of sugars that are added to food and beverages while processing, cooking, or by any other external means.

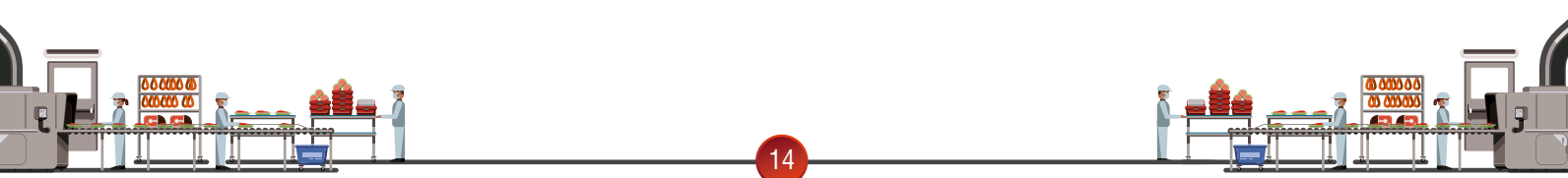
You will find percent RDA on the label calculated based on 50 g added sugar as specified in Food Safety and Standards Regulations.

Total Sugars: Generally, taken as a combination of both naturally occurring (inherently present) and added sugars in a product.

Consumption of Sugar(s)⁸

- 'Sugars' means all monosaccharides (glucose, fructose, etc.) and disaccharides (maltose, sucrose, lactose, etc.), while 'sugar' is generally a reference used for sucrose.
- Sugar(s) is practically present in all foods, be it raw, home cooked or food available in the market. Therefore, consumption of sugar(s) depends on 'quantity' and 'type' of sugar(s) included in diet.
- When consumed in moderation, sugar(s) is a good source of energy. However, over consumption may lead to weight gain and obesity.

When consumed in moderation, sugar forms a good source of energy for the body.



- Even foods with natural sugars like fruits, when eaten in excess may lead to over consumption of sugars.
- It is necessary for consumer to define their portions and balance their consumption in daily diets accordingly.

Total Fat, Saturated Fat, Trans Fat

Fats⁹ also contribute to calories in our diet since it provides high amounts of energy. Besides, fats enhance texture, taste and flavour of food. They also give an excellent sense of fullness from dietary sources.

Sources of Fat: There is small amount of invisible fat in almost every food item (maize, bajra, nuts, oilseeds, etc.). Visible sources include oil, ghee, butter, etc. All these sources, together contribute the **total fat** intake of a person.

“
Carbohydrates, Proteins
& Fats are the
macronutrients that form
the bulk of the food.
”

Major types of dietary fats are **saturated fats** and **mono- and polyunsaturated fats or MUFAs and PUFAs**.

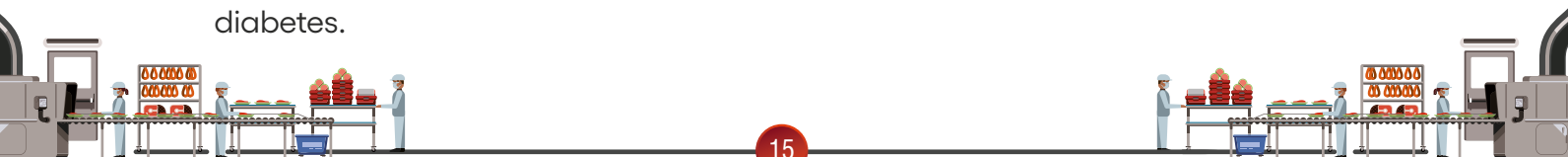
Saturated Fat: Typically, solid at room temperature and comes primarily from animal sources like meats, dairy, egg yolks. Oils like palm oil and coconut oil are also rich in saturated fats. These can raise the level of bad cholesterol in blood, thereby indicating its relationship with heart related risks. As a result, it is often suggested to reduce the intake of saturated fats in diet.

Monounsaturated Fatty Acids (MUFA): Typically liquid at room temperature, although they may solidify at refrigerated temperatures. Found in highest concentration in olive and canola oils, nuts, seeds, avocados, etc. Meats may also contain some amounts of MUFA. These are known to improve cholesterol levels in blood, exhibiting a great potential to prevent cardiac risks.

Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids (PUFA): Typically, liquid at both room and cold temperatures. Soybean, Sunflower, Corn, and Safflower oils contain PUFAs.

Two most essential PUFAs are omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. Mostly, both omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids play an optimal role in protection against disease.

Trans Fats: Trans fat or trans-fatty acids (TFA) are unsaturated fatty acids that come from either industrial or natural sources. Trans fat is produced industrially by the partial hydrogenation of any edible oils. Trans fat is known to increase bad cholesterol and may increase the risk of heart attacks, stroke, and type 2 diabetes.



Few points to consider:

- A certain amount of dietary fat, particularly the essential omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, is necessary for normal physiological function. These are essential fatty acids, meaning the body cannot synthesize them and they must be consumed through diet.
- Consuming some dietary fat is also important for adequate absorption of fat-soluble vitamins (vitamins A, E, D, K, and carotenoids) from food.
- Fats provide low levels of satiety, thereby leading to overconsumption of foods rich in fat.
- High-fat diets have been shown to contribute to excess energy intake leading to obesity and non-communicable diseases.

“

Check for fat content on food labels. For an average adult, percent RDA is calculated based on 67 g total fat, 22 g saturated fat and 2 g trans fat as per the regulations.

”

Sodium and Salt Relationship

The terms 'table salt' and 'sodium' are often used interchangeably, however, they both differ in their principle. Salt is primarily Sodium Chloride (NaCl), an indispensable component of food, and controlling its intake is crucial for public health. On the other hand, when it comes to food labelling, Sodium is a mandatory requirement to be mentioned on Nutrition Information Panel and percent RDA is calculated based on 2000 mg of Sodium on label. The relationship between sodium and table salt can be explained as:

1 mg of sodium = 2.5 mg of salt

OR

1 teaspoon (5 g) salt = 2000 mg Sodium

Since ancient times, salt became an important commodity for trade because of its antimicrobial role in food preservation. We now well understand that salt is a basic taste and is critical for physiological functions like maintaining the body's electrolyte balance. While low salt intake results in cerebral wastage, excessive salt intake is associated with hypertension, which is called a silent killer. Here are some tips to help consumers reduce their table salt consumption:

- **Reduce salt at the table:** Limit sprinkling salt over the food, especially before tasting it. Resisting the urge to add salt over the top can significantly reduce the consumption of excess salt during every meal.
- **Gradually reduce:** Moderate consumption and gradual changes in diet is crucial to avoid feeling deprived of a specific nutrient.

- **Stay hydrated:** Drinking plenty of water can help in regulating blood pressure in long run.
- **Read labels:** Since sodium is a mandatory requirement on food packages, you can always check the label and opt for foods as per your dietary preferences.

Protein

- High-quality protein is essential for optimal growth, development, and health in humans. An appropriate mixture of plant and animal based foods is a practical way to ensure balanced intake of proteins in diet.
- The RDA for protein has been specified at **54 g/day for adult men and 46 g/day for adult women**¹⁰. These values increase for pregnant and lactating women whereas for children, the values are based on their body weight.

Dietary Fiber

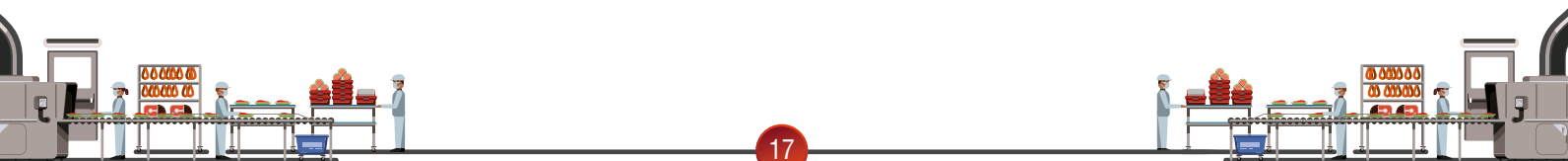
Dietary fiber is a very important part of diet as foods containing fiber take longer to digest and helps in feeling full for longer time periods. It also helps in regulating bowel movements and prevent constipation. Further, it also enhances the gut health of an individual¹¹.

“
*Vitamins & Minerals
 are crucial for supporting
 growth & development
 of your body.*
 ”

Other foods important for a healthy gut:

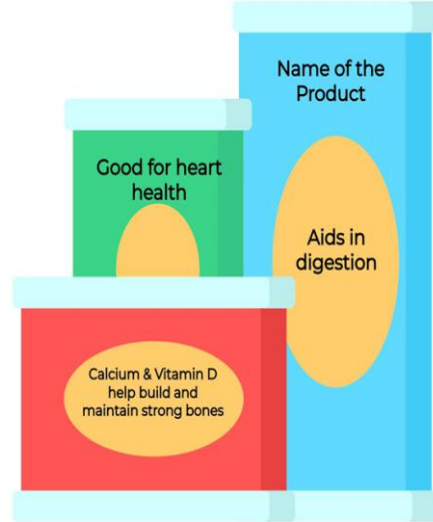
Prebiotics: These are non-digestible dietary fibers that stimulate the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gut. Prebiotics also serve as a source of food for the probiotics to grow. They are generally found in high-fiber foods like whole grains, bananas, soybeans, etc.

Probiotics: These are live microorganisms that help maintain the balance of good and bad bacteria in the digestive system. Therefore, they are known to improve food digestion, consumption and improve overall health. Probiotics can be found in several fermented foods like yogurt, kimchi, cheese, etc.



Claims Made on Package

A 'claim' can be defined as any representation that is present on the food package and implies that the food has qualities relating to its origin, nutritional properties, nature, processing, composition or otherwise. They must be truthful, unambiguous, and not misleading in any way to help consumers comprehend the information provided on the food package.



These claims are regulated under Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018⁷. The claims made on label and advertisements shall comply with the said regulations.

The claims can be categorized into various types depending upon the type of claims made on the packages.

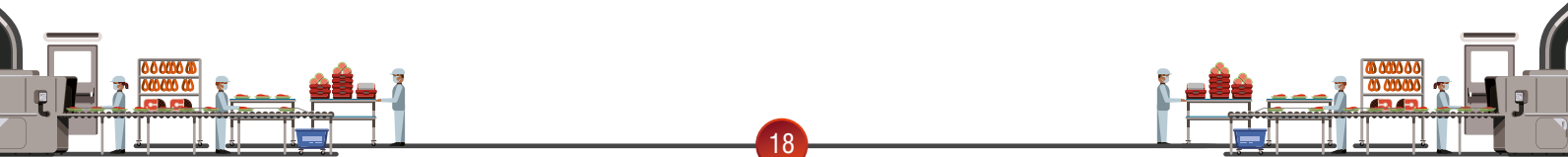
You will often find some of these claims on package:

'Rich in Protein', 'Source of Vitamin/ Mineral', 'No added sugar', etc.

Let's understand how these claims are made on food packages:

Claims can be made, only if they are in compliance with the FSSAI regulations.

FSSAI provides conditions based on 'per 100g/100ml' or 'per 100 kcal' or 'per serve' for solid/ liquid products depending upon the type of claim to be made. For example, Advertising and Claims Regulations provides following conditions per serving to be met in a given product:



1. Rich in Protein

Contains/ Source of Protein	10 percent of RDA per serving
Rich in Protein	20 percent of RDA per serving

2. Source of Vitamin/ Mineral

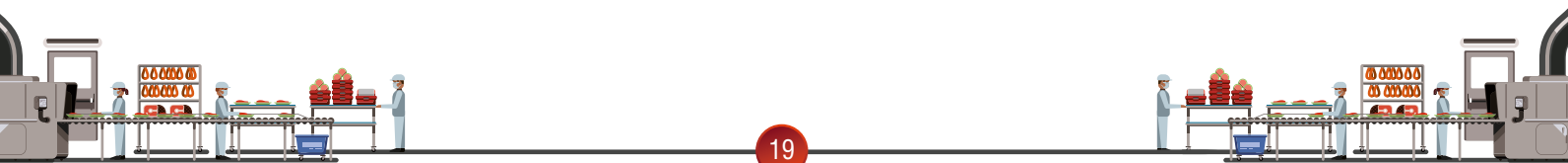
Source of Vitamin/ Mineral	15 percent of RDA per serving
Rich in Vitamin/ Mineral	30 percent of RDA per serving

- 3. No Added Sugar:** Such claim can be made if no sugar has been added to the product, directly or indirectly through an ingredient or additive that can impart added sugar in the product.

Claims regarding the non-addition of sugars to a food may also be made, where sugars are naturally present in the food (e.g. fruits, milk, cereals etc.) but in such cases the following indication shall also appear on the label:

'CONTAINS NATURALLY OCCURRING SUGARS'

For a detailed description and conditions of claims, you may access the relevant regulations as provided in the reference section.



Role of Food Additives in Modern Food Production

Food additives are substances primarily added to processed foods for technological purposes, e.g., to improve shelf life, safety or improved sensorial attributes (taste, texture, appearance). They can be natural or artificial¹² and must be used in accordance with Food Safety and Standards Regulations. Food additives are not normally consumed as a food by itself.

Categorization based on function performed

Preservatives: Help in preventing food spoilage. Example: salt, vinegar, sugar, artificial one like sodium benzoate, etc.

Food Colours: Giving food a specific color. For example, Beta Carotene is a natural colour whereas Brilliant Blue FCF is artificial.

Flavouring agents: Enhance or mask the taste of food. These can be natural, nature-identical, or artificial.

Antioxidants: Act against oxidation thereby preventing rancidity in food. Few commonly used antioxidants are Vitamin C and Vitamin E.

Stabilizers, thickeners & emulsifiers: Improve texture, thickness, consistency of food such as gum arabic, lecithin, and cornstarch which are commonly used at home for making fruit custard as well.

How to identify? Consumers are encouraged to check INS number of food additive over product label. Identify any additive mentioned on label by its INS number via accessing the FSSAI regulations⁴.



Display of Information in Food Service Establishments

Food Service Establishments include a wide range of businesses including catering, hotels, restaurants, canteens, etc.

Structure: Broadly, the catering industry can be broken down into three segments:

- **Unorganized:** Includes roadside eateries and dhaba which have been the common eating out option e.g. street food, dhaba etc.
- **Organized:** Examples include Quick Service Restaurant (QSR), other Restaurants etc.
- **Special Categories:** Includes flight catering, hospital catering, railway catering, catering in Government Programs (Mid-Day Meals) etc.

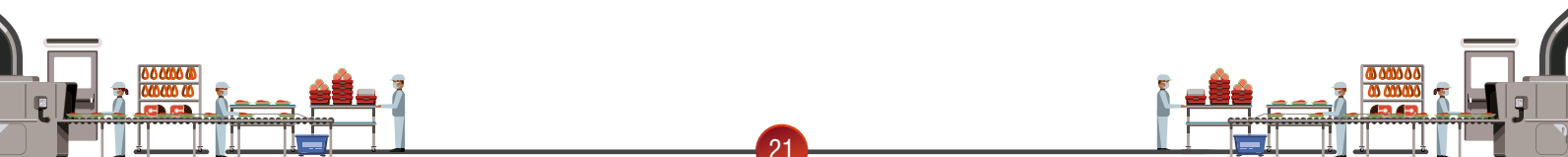
Licensing: It is mandatory for Food Business Operators to display a true copy of the license at all times at a prominent place in their premises.

Labelling: FSSAI permits Food Service Establishments to display information using various options and formats as given below:



S.No.	Information	Information providing method
1	Calorific value	Menu cards or boards or booklets
2	Food allergens	Menu cards or boards
3	Logo for veg or non-veg	Menu cards or boards
4	Nutritional information, specific requirements (if applicable) and information relating to organic food or ingredients, if claimed	Booklets or handouts or on their website

- It is important to note that the establishments have the discretion or the flexibility to select any one of the methods for providing information as a part of their service.
- Additionally, reference information on calorie requirements shall also be displayed clearly and prominently as “An average active adult requires 2,000 kcal energy per day, however, calorie needs may vary”.



Understanding Satiety and Food Combinations

Food satiety and combinations

Satiety, in simple terms, refers to the feeling of fullness that a consumer can experience after an eating phase or meal. Nutrients play a potential role in satiety wherein protein is considered most effective macronutrient for providing satiety.

The order^{13,14} is as follows: Protein > Carbohydrate > Fat

- Consumers can opt for diets rich in protein as it would offer them with satiety for a longer time
- Besides protein, dietary fibre also promotes satiety and weight management due to its role in aiding digestion.

“
Identify foods & beverages that cause satiety sustained over longer periods of time.
”

Food combinations

It is advised to consume foods in combination as mostly nutrient in one food will tend to complement with nutrient in another food.

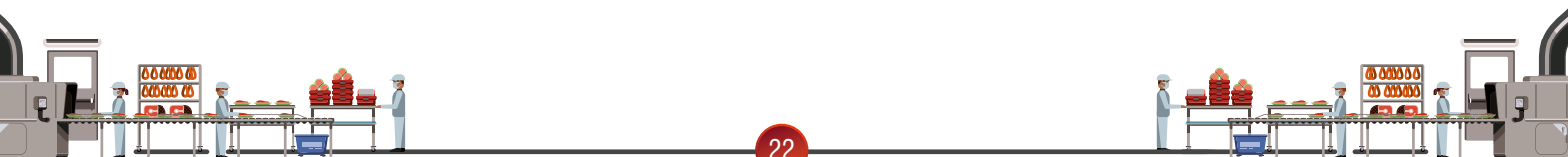
For example, ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) from citrus fruits promotes absorption of non-haem iron in plant-based foods e.g., cereals and banana. Therefore, it is often advised to consume them together¹⁵. Similarly, cereal and pulse based foods are also advised to eat together for maximum nutrient retention.

Snacking between meals

All of us feel the urge to eat something in between or main meals. The focus must not only be based on what food is consumed but also how and when consumption of food takes place¹⁶. It is also important to understand how the snack fits into your overall eating plan.

Pros:

Nutrient intake: Snacks can help in filling nutrition gaps that may not be fulfilled by other meals of the day.



Weight management: Snacks are a means of controlling appetite and eating behaviour, assuming their mindful consumption by consumers.

Hunger management: Consuming an adequate snack in between also prevents overconsumption of food during the main meals.

Energy boost: Skipping meals can result in higher glucose peaks, whereas frequent meal consumption can prevent that and provide a sense of energy boost to the consumer.

“
Eating a varied diet helps you get the nutrients you need and makes your meal interesting.
 ”

Cons:

Binge snacking: During binge or uncontrolled snacking, consumers may eat larger than usual amounts of food.

Weight gain: Overconsumption or consuming snacks more often can result in excess intake leading to weight gain.

Consumption at odd times: Eating snacks late at night can impair the weight management and regular consumption may even produce health issues like obesity.



Picture Source
<https://www.wsj.com/health/wellness/healthy-snacking-science-tips-47cc1e66>

Cultural and Occasional Treats/Foods



Food plays a significant part in Indian culture and tradition, to the point where certain recipes are only prepared during special occasions.

From indulging into sweet delicacies on festivals like Diwali to consuming specific Satvik foods during fasting or Navratri, Indian festivals are a great example of offering varied consumer experience with food. Besides festivals, café hopping,

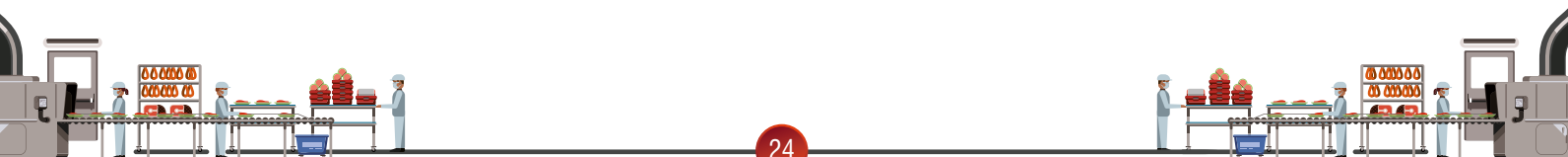
social brunch occasions, exploring new places and restaurants have become an occasional trend, not only among youngsters but people of all age groups. Consumers are actively interested in these activities; hence food outlets satisfy consumer's desire by providing them with a memorable experience.

Social aspect of food: Food is a means to engage, socialise, meet up with people. Many consumers also utilise social media to share cooking creations and enjoyment.

Guidance for consumers during festive occasions

Most of the times, festive foods can be high in calories, including foods with higher amounts of fat, sugar, and salt. Therefore, consumers must adopt the following steps for a mindful consumption of occasional treats:

1. **Avoid overeating:** While cultural and occasional treats are a part of life, it is important to consume them in moderation. Savouring smaller portions is the key since overindulgence can lead to weight gain and other health issues.
2. **Limit frequency:** Savor the taste and experience of cultural and festive treats without feeling guilty. The idea is to enjoy them on special occasions and don't make them a part of your regular diet.
3. **Restrict dish size:** Prefer smaller dishware for serving food that naturally limits the quantity of food being served during occasions.
4. **Pause between bites:** By pausing between snacking, one can realise the satiety and fullness thereby preventing overeating delicacies.



Digital Food Delivery Platforms

A food delivery platform allows consumers to order foods including grocery items, processed foods, etc. from multiple places using website or mobile applications.

Digital connectivity and E-Commerce platforms

Online food ordering gives customers the freedom and choice to place an order virtually any time, from anywhere, saving the time and resources.

Be digitally informed

- Consumers today have the privilege to choose from a variety of cuisines listed in the e-commerce space.
- Consumers can look out for food labels on food delivery apps or websites before ordering, thereby enabling them to make informed choices.
- Various food delivery web portals and mobile apps enable customer to compare between food outlets, food options, and competitive prices.

Food Product Listing and Information

The business operators are required to display a clear picture of the food product on e-commerce platforms. Additionally, license or registration number shall also be displayed.



Importance of Maintaining Health and Regular Physical Activity



An active and healthy lifestyle, together with a balanced diet, is essential to maintain health and wellbeing across all ages.

World Health Organization (WHO) defines physical activity as 'any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure'. In simple terms, physical activity is any movement including walking, cycling, sports, play and can be done at any level by individuals.

Incorporating physical activity, not just amidst festive celebrations but also as a part of your regular routine, holds immense value in maintaining overall health and well-being.

Some good practices to follow:

- Doing some type of physical activity is must. Try to balance 'calorie in' through food and 'calorie out' through exercises.
- Children and adolescents should gradually increase the duration, frequency, and intensity of activity over time.
- Older adults should adopt physical activity as per their functional ability.
- The amount of time being spent on screen should be reduced for all age groups. This will enable consumers to actively participate in physical tasks.
- Participation in sports or habitual activity (e.g., walking to work as opposed to driving; climbing stairs as opposed to using lifts, etc.) can show positive effects, including motivation to eat, different selection of foods, etc.



Include Yoga in our daily routine to live healthy life

Regular yogic exercises with proper postures help to decrease the amount of fats and calories in our body and improves digestion and metabolic activity of a person¹⁷.

Sound sleep is important

Do not compromise on sleep, insufficient sleep is a public health problem and must be addressed by people. It is recommended to get at least 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night for adults.

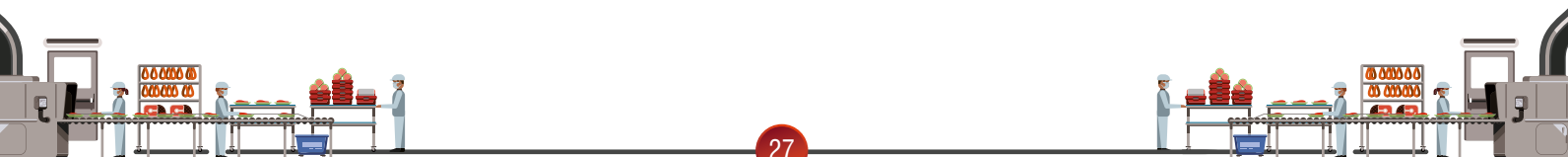
“
Long working hours can promote stress-induced eating, thereby leading to under/overconsumption of food and adversely impacting the health.
 ”

Restrict working hours

Hectic schedules have become a trend in modern lifestyle. However, it is important to understand that prolonged or frequent work stress can lead to adverse dietary changes and impact food choices¹⁸.

Sunlight exposure

It is advised to expose yourself to sunlight for at least 30 minutes preferably between 11am to 2pm for appropriate utilization of nutrients, especially Vitamin D. This will further help in calcium absorption in the body.



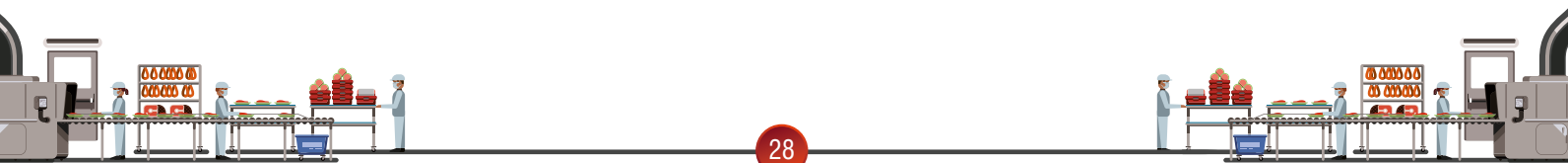
Conclusion

The "FICCI Guidelines for Consumers of Processed Foods 2024" serves as a comprehensive resource to empower consumers with the knowledge and tools needed to make informed decisions about their dietary choices in a world dominated by variety of food choices. In an era where food products are constantly evolving and are available in vast variety, understanding the intricacies of food labels, nutritional content, and the implications of food processing is crucial.

From a technical standpoint, these guidelines are rooted in the latest regulatory standards and scientific research, ensuring that consumers are provided with accurate and reliable information. The guidelines incorporate information from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India regulations and other important bodies to establish a clear framework for understanding processed food labels and nutrient content. This approach is designed to help consumers not only meet their nutritional needs but also make choices that align with current public health goals, such as reducing the intake of trans fats, added sugars, and sodium.

By adopting these guidelines, consumers can better navigate the complexities of modern food consumption, ensuring that their choices contribute positively to their overall health and well-being. We encourage consumers to stay informed, be vigilant about the authenticity of information, and embrace a balanced approach to diet and lifestyle.

Moreover, we recognize the importance of feedback in continuously improving these guidelines. We invite you to share your thoughts and experiences, which will help us refine the recommendations and better serve the needs of consumers in the future. Together, we can promote healthier dietary habits and contribute to a more informed and health-conscious society.



References

- 1 The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006
<https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/FOOD-ACT.pdf>
- 2 <https://www.mofpi.gov.in/sites/default/files/databank.pdf>
- 3 The Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020
https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Comp_Labelling.pdf
- 4 The Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulation, 2011:
[https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Appendix%20C\(1\).pdf](https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Appendix%20C(1).pdf)
- 5 The Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulation, 2017:
https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Compendium_Organic_Food_05_06_2022.pdf
- 6 The Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018:
https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Compendium_Food_Fortification_Regulations_05_06_2022.pdf
- 7 The Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018
https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Compendium_Advertising_Claims_Regulations_14_12_2022.pdf
- 8 GUPTA, P., & PUSHKALA, K. (2022). TWO WHITE ENEMIES: SALT AND SUGAR: 1I. CONSUMPTION OF SUGAR: PROS AND CONS. *Journal of Cell and Tissue Research*, 22(2), 7225-7244.
- 9 Lovejoy, J. C. (2010). Fat: the good, the bad, and the ugly. *Nutrition guide for physicians*, 1-11.
- 10 Indian Council of Medical Research - National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) Recommended Dietary Allowances 2020
https://www.nin.res.in/RDA_Full_Report_2024.html
- 11 Redgwell, R. J., & Fischer, M. (2005). Dietary fiber as a versatile food component: an industrial perspective. *Molecular nutrition & food research*, 49(6), 521-535.
- 12 Ukwo, S. P., Udo, I. I., & Ndaeyo, N. (2022). Food additives: overview of related safety concerns. *Food Sci Nutr Res*, 5(1), 1-10.
- 13 Chambers, L., McCrickerd, K., & Yeomans, M. R. (2015). Optimising foods for satiety. *Trends in Food Science & Technology*, 41(2), 149-160.
- 14 Tremblay, A., & Bellisle, F. (2015). Nutrients, satiety, and control of energy intake. *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism*, 40(10), 971-979.
- 15 Zotor, F. B., Ellahi, B., & Amuna, P. (2015). Applying the food multimix concept for sustainable and nutritious diets. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 74(4), 505-516.
- 16 Marangoni, F., Martini, D., Scaglioni, S., Sculati, M., Donini, L. M., Leonardi, F., ... & Poli, A. (2019). Snacking in nutrition and health. *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition*, 70(8), 909-923.
- 17 Singh, D. V. (2022). Yoga: A new perspective on yoga asana, health and well-being. *Journal of Sports Science and Nutrition*, 3(2), 07-09.
- 18 Wardle, J., Steptoe, A., Oliver, G., & Lipsey, Z. (2000). Stress, dietary restraint and food intake. *Journal of psychosomatic research*, 48(2), 195-202.

Disclaimer

The "Draft Guidelines for Consumers of Processed Foods" are provided for informational purposes only and are intended to promote consumer awareness and understanding of best practices regarding the consumption of processed foods. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information contained herein, the authors, publishers, and associated regulatory authorities accept no responsibility for any errors, omissions, or consequences arising from the use of this document. These guidelines do not constitute legal, medical, or professional advice and should not be relied upon as such. Citations and references included in the guidelines are for informational purposes only and do not imply endorsement of any product, service, or external source. Users of this document are advised to seek professional guidance where necessary. The authors and publishers disclaim any liability for any loss, injury, or damages of any kind resulting from the use or misuse of this information.

For any feedback or additional information, write to us at:

 cifti@ficci.com, foodprocessing@ficci.com

Ms. Perna Sethi, Research Associate

Ms. Varsha Yadav, Research Associate

Dr. Vineet Shyam, Senior Assistant Director

Dr. Anirudha Chhonkar, Lead-Regulatory Affairs

Mr. Hemant Seth, Senior Director and Head - Food Processing, Agriculture and Water



Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

Federation House, Tansen Marg

New Delhi 110001

www.ficci.com