

FOOD & NUTRACEUTICAL LABELLING

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As per the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and FSSAI Regulations

Regulatory overview • Mandatory declarations • Nutrition • Claims • Health supplements & nutraceuticals

1. Regulatory framework

Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 — principal food-safety statute in India.

FSS (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020 — general labelling/display requirements for pre-packaged foods.

FSS (Health Supplements, Nutraceuticals, FSDU, FSMP, Functional Food and Novel Food) Regulations, 2016, with applicable amendments/directions — category-specific requirements.

FSS (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018, as amended — nutrition and health claims.

Legal Metrology requirements also apply to declarations such as net quantity, MRP and consumer-care information.

What We'll Cover



The FSS Act & FSSAI Framework

Origins, objectives and the regulatory hierarchy



General Food Labelling Rules

Mandatory declarations under the 2020 Regulations



Anatomy of a Food Label

A worked, element-by-element example



Front-of-Pack & Allergens

FOPL warnings, veg/non-veg marks, allergen rules



Nutraceutical & Supplement Labels

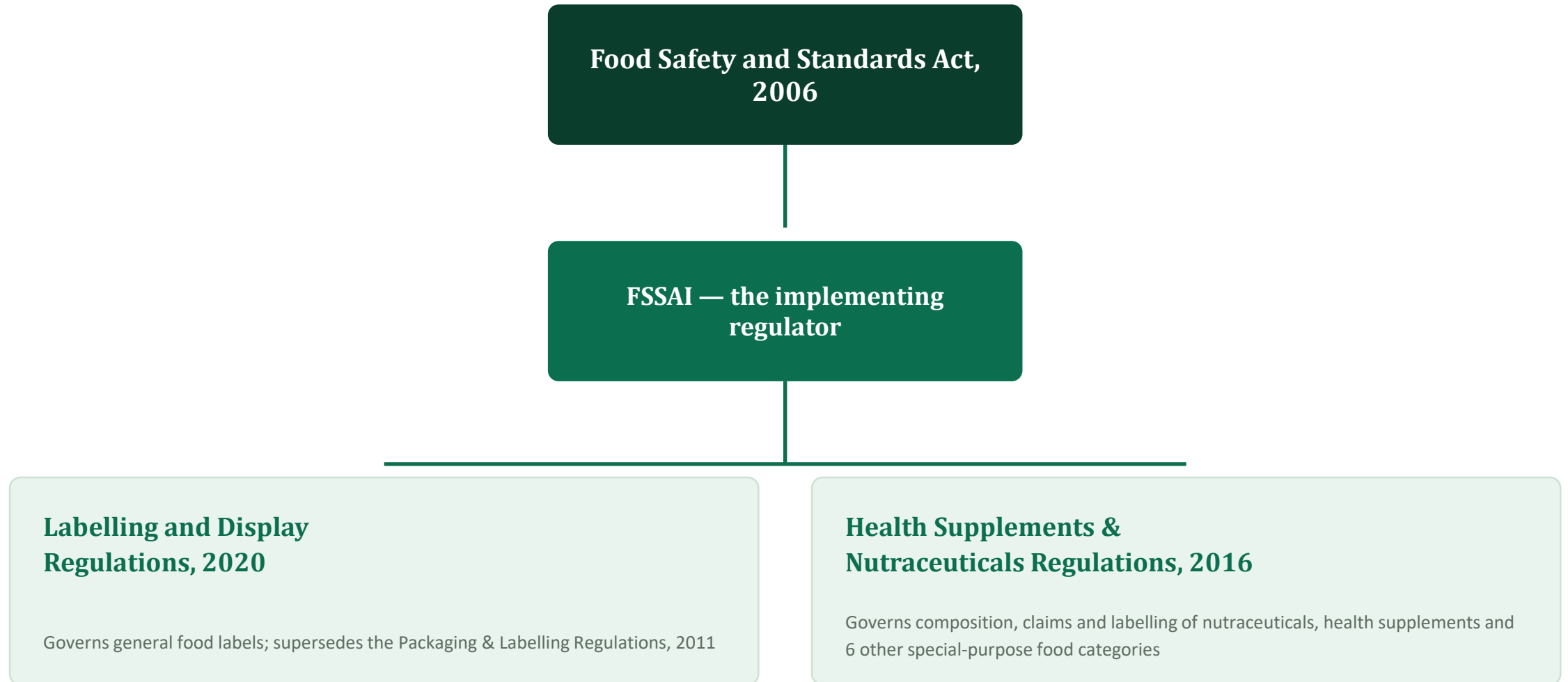
The 2016 Regulations and their specific declarations



Comparison, Penalties & Checklist

Key differences, consequences of non-compliance

The Regulatory Framework for Labelling



2. Objectives of food labelling

- Provide truthful, clear and meaningful information to consumers.
Enable informed choice about identity, composition, quantity, nutrition and allergens.
- Prevent false, misleading or deceptive presentation.
- Provide traceability through FSSAI licence details, batch/lot and responsible food-business-operator information.
- Support safe use through storage conditions, instructions and mandatory warnings.

3. General principles for labels

- Information must be clear, prominent, conspicuous, indelible and readily legible.
- Pre-packaged food must not be described or presented in a false, misleading or deceptive manner.
- Mandatory declarations are generally in English or Hindi; additional languages may be used if they do not contradict the required information.
- Label must remain attached to the container and information must be accessible to the consumer.
- Pictures/graphics may be used only when consistent with regulatory requirements.

General Food Labelling Requirements



Name of the food

The common or generic name, plus any true nature/description



List of ingredients

Descending order of weight, with additive class names



Nutritional information

Energy, protein, carbs, fat etc. per 100g/ml and per serving



FSSAI logo & licence number

14-digit licence number mandatory on every package



Net quantity, MRP & address

Manufacturer/marketer name and complete address



Veg / non-veg symbol

Green or brown/red dot as applicable



Lot / batch / code number

For traceability and recall



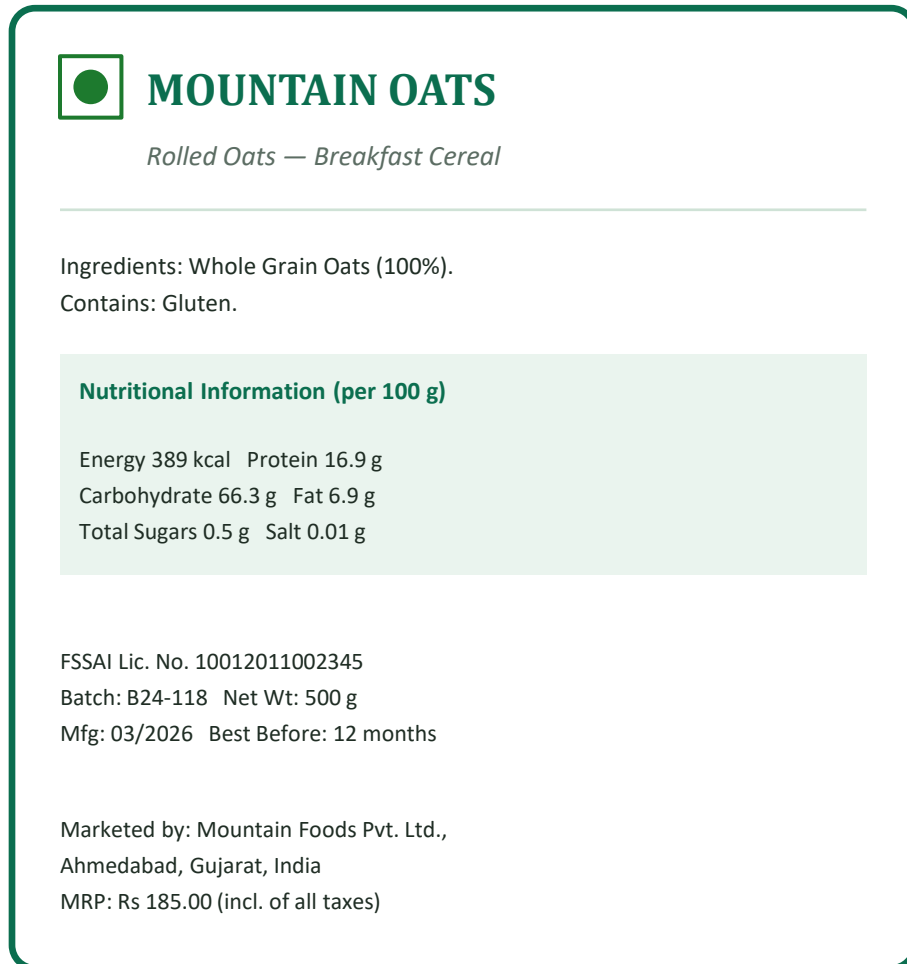
Date marking

Date of manufacture and "best before"/"use by" date

4. Key mandatory declarations on packaged food

- Name of the food / true nature of the food.
- List of ingredients in the prescribed order, subject to applicable exemptions.
- Nutrition Information, where applicable.
- Food additives, colours, flavours and other prescribed components.
- Allergen declaration where applicable.
- Net quantity; MRP and consumer-care details under Legal Metrology requirements.
- Batch / lot / code identification and prescribed date marking.
- Manufacturer/packer/importer/brand-owner name and address, as applicable.
- FSSAI logo and licence number, as applicable.

Anatomy of a Packaged Food Label



1

Veg symbol

Green dot in a square — mandatory on every vegetarian pack

2

Name of food

Brand plus the true generic descriptor

3

Ingredient & allergen list

Descending order by weight; allergens called out

4

Nutrition table

Per 100 g/ml and, where applicable, per serving

5

Licence, batch & date marks

FSSAI number, batch code, mfg/best-before dates

6

Marketer address & MRP

Full address and inclusive retail price

Front-of-Pack Labelling (FOPL) & Amendments

Front-of-pack labelling requires critical nutrient information — high fat, sugar or salt — to be displayed prominently on the front of the pack, not buried in a back-panel table.



2024 amendment: bold, larger display

Total sugar, salt and saturated fat must be shown in bold, larger font on packaged food labels — approved by FSSAI on 6 July 2024.

Applies uniformly to both domestically produced and imported food products.



5. Ingredient & allergen declaration

Ingredients should be declared by common/usual or prescribed names and in the required order.

Compound ingredients require appropriate sub-ingredient declaration, subject to exemptions.

Specified allergens must be declared prominently, including relevant cereals containing gluten, milk, egg, fish, crustaceans, peanuts, tree nuts and soy.

Food additives must be declared as required, including functional class/name or INS number where applicable.

Allergen precautionary statements do not replace proper ingredient/allergen controls.

Veg / Non-Veg Marks & Allergen Declaration



Vegetarian mark

A green filled circle inside a green-bordered square, on every vegetarian food package.



Non-vegetarian mark

A brown/red filled circle inside a matching square border, mandatory on non-veg food.



Mandatory allergen declaration

The 2020 Regulations require a clear "Contains" statement for common allergens present in — or cross-contaminated into — the product:

- Milk & dairy
- Eggs
- Peanuts & tree nuts
- Soy
- Wheat / gluten
- Fish & shellfish

6. Nutrition information

- Nutrition declaration generally includes energy and prescribed nutrients per 100 g/100 ml or per serving, as applicable.
- Where required, declare protein, carbohydrate, total sugars, added sugars, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and other prescribed nutrients.
- Per-serving %RDA is required where applicable.
- Serving size and number of servings should be stated where required.
- Nutrition claims such as 'low fat', 'high protein' or 'source of fibre' must meet applicable criteria.

7. Date, storage and consumer-use information

- Use the prescribed date-marking format and terminology applicable to the product.
- Storage conditions should be stated when needed to maintain safety/quality.
- Special instructions for use, reconstitution, dilution or handling should be provided where applicable.
- Imported foods must carry prescribed importer/market information and other mandatory declarations.
- Labels should allow consumers to identify the product and responsible food business operator.

8. What are health supplements & nutraceuticals?

- These are specially formulated foods regulated by FSSAI, rather than medicines under the Drugs and Cosmetics framework.
- Health supplements may contain vitamins, minerals, amino acids, enzymes, probiotics or other permitted substances.
- Nutraceuticals are foods or food components subject to specified nutritional/physiological benefit and compositional conditions.
- Nutra products are intended for oral consumption in defined quantities/durations; the framework excludes products intended for parenteral use.
- Confirm current permitted ingredient, source, dosage and product-category conditions before commercialisation.

9. Special labelling — nutraceuticals / health supplements

- Category name such as 'HEALTH SUPPLEMENT' or 'NUTRACEUTICAL' must be displayed as applicable, in the prescribed manner.
- Target consumer group / age group should be declared when formulated for a specific group.
- Required 'NOT FOR MEDICINAL USE' statement must be prominently displayed, subject to applicable exemptions.
- Recommended usage/daily usage and relevant precautions/warnings must be declared as prescribed.
- Quantity of nutrients/bioactive substances per serving and %RDA should be provided where applicable.
- Do not imply that the product treats, cures or prevents disease unless specifically permitted.

Nutraceuticals & Health Supplements: Legal Basis

The Food Safety and Standards (Health Supplements, Nutraceuticals, Food for Special Dietary Use, Food for Special Medical Purpose, Functional Food and Novel Food) Regulations, 2016 were notified on 23 December 2016 and became enforceable from 1 January 2018. They cover composition, permissible claims and labelling for eight distinct food categories.



Health Supplements



Nutraceuticals



Food for Special Dietary Use



Food for Special Medical Purpose



Specialty food with plants/botanicals



Foods with probiotics



Foods with prebiotics



Novel foods

10. Nutraceutical ingredient declaration

- Declare each specific nutrient, botanical, bioactive or other permitted ingredient and its quantity per serving as required.
- For botanicals, identify plant/part and other prescribed particulars where applicable.
- Standardisation/active-marker information should be declared when required.
- Vitamins and minerals should use prescribed names and units.
- Verify every ingredient and level against current FSSAI permissions/schedules before artwork approval.

Nutraceutical Labelling — Mandatory Declarations



Category name on the label

e.g. “NUTRACEUTICAL” or “HEALTH SUPPLEMENT” stated clearly



Purpose of the product

What the product is intended to supplement or support



Target consumer group

Age group / condition the product is meant for



RDA contribution

% contribution to Recommended Dietary Allowance per serving



Dosage & duration of use

Recommended daily dose and maximum recommended duration



Directions & precautions

Instructions for use appropriate to the intended consumer



No disease claims

Must not claim to prevent, cure or treat any human disease



Substantiated claims only

Structure/function or well-being claims need scientific evidence

11. Claims: nutrition vs health claims

Nutrition claim: describes a nutritional property, e.g. 'source of calcium' or 'low fat', only when criteria are met.

Health claim: indicates a relationship between a food/category and health; it must comply with the claims regulations.

Claims must be truthful, scientifically supportable and not misleading.

Comparative claims require an appropriate reference and prescribed conditions.

Claims must not turn a food/nutraceutical into an implied drug.

12. Claims that should be avoided

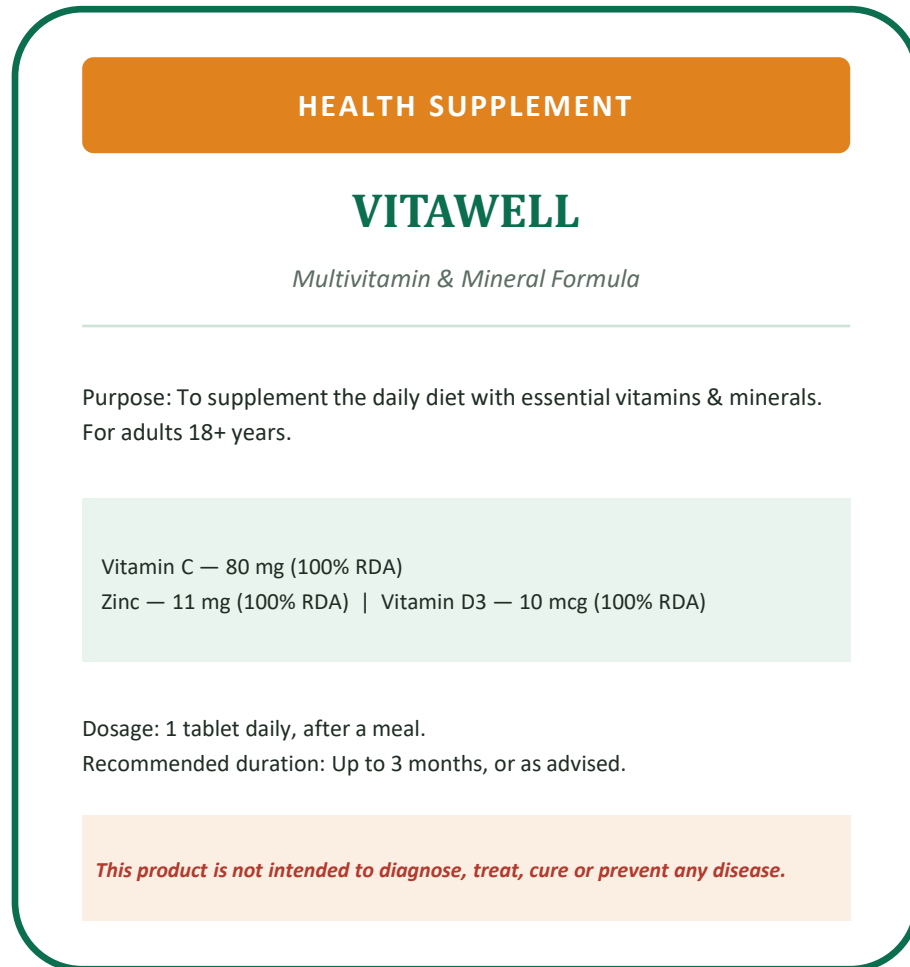
- ✗ 'Cures diabetes' / 'prevents cancer' / 'treats arthritis' unless specifically authorised.
- ✗ '100% safe' or 'no side effects' — potentially misleading absolute claims.
- ✗ Unsubstantiated doctor/medical endorsement claims.
- ✗ Drug-like therapeutic imagery or statements creating an erroneous impression.
- ✗ Guaranteed outcomes or exaggerated physiological effects.

Use permitted claims with documented scientific substantiation and regulatory review.

13. Labelling of vitamins & minerals

- Declare nutrient name and quantity per serving in the prescribed unit.
- Where applicable, declare %RDA using FSSAI reference values.
- Check upper limits, recommended daily usage and category-specific conditions.
- Use consistent, unambiguous units such as mg, µg and IU where specifically appropriate.
- For combinations, verify each ingredient individually against the applicable permitted list and level.

Anatomy of a Nutraceutical / Health Supplement Label



1

Category declaration

"HEALTH SUPPLEMENT" / "NUTRACEUTICAL" shown prominently

2

Purpose & target group

What it does, and who it is intended for

3

RDA contribution

% Recommended Dietary Allowance per serving/tablet

4

Dosage & duration

Daily dose and recommended maximum duration of use

5

Mandatory disclaimer

No disease-cure/prevention/treatment claim permitted

Food Label vs. Nutraceutical Label — Key Differences

Aspect	General Food Label	Nutraceutical Label
Governing regulation	Labelling and Display Regulations, 2020	Health Supplements & Nutraceuticals Regulations, 2016
Category statement	Not required — generic food name suffices	Mandatory: e.g. “NUTRACEUTICAL” / “HEALTH SUPPLEMENT”
Core numeric declaration	Nutrition table per 100 g/ml & per serving	% RDA contribution per serving, plus dosage
Duration / dosage	Not applicable	Recommended duration of use & maximum daily dose
Disease-related claims	Restricted, but framework is general	Explicitly barred from any cure/prevent/treat claim

QR Codes & E-Commerce Labelling



QR codes on food labels

FSSAI has recommended including a QR code on food packaging that links to comprehensive product information — improving accessibility, including for visually impaired consumers, and supporting traceability.



E-commerce platforms

Online marketplaces must display the mandatory label information on the product page itself — ingredients, allergens, nutritional information, FSSAI logo, veg/non-veg mark and expiry — before the consumer completes a purchase.



Both requirements aim at the same goal: giving consumers full, verifiable label information at the point of decision — whether they are standing in a store aisle or browsing online.

14. Vegetarian / non-vegetarian / vegan declarations

- Vegetarian/non-vegetarian symbol requirements apply according to applicable FSSAI rules.
- Vegan claims/logo are governed by the FSS (Vegan Foods) Regulations, 2022 and related directions.
- Do not use vegetarian, vegan or other special-diet claims without meeting relevant conditions.
- Check current FSSAI directions and logo requirements before final artwork.

15. Label approval — practical QA checklist

1. Confirm product category and applicable regulation.
2. Verify every ingredient against permitted lists, source and level.
3. Verify product name and category declaration.
4. Check ingredient order, additives, allergens and quantitative declarations.
5. Verify nutrition panel, serving size and %RDA calculations.
6. Review all claims against FSSAI requirements and scientific evidence.
7. Check FSSAI logo/licence number, batch, dates, manufacturer/importer and Legal Metrology declarations.
8. QA/Regulatory Affairs should approve final artwork before printing.

16. Example — nutraceutical label layout

- FRONT: Brand + product name + category (e.g. NUTRACEUTICAL) + key permitted claim + net quantity.
- BACK/SIDE: Ingredients → active ingredients per serving → nutrition/%RDA where applicable → recommended usage → warnings/precautions → 'NOT FOR MEDICINAL USE' where required.
- TRACEABILITY: Batch/Lot No. → Mfg/Pkd date → Expiry/Best Before → FSSAI licence no. → manufacturer/marketer/importer details.
- LEGAL/CONSUMER: MRP, customer-care details, storage instructions and other applicable declarations.

17. Important 2026 regulatory update

- FSSAI's Labelling & Display First Amendment Regulations, 2026 were notified on 24 March 2026.
- The notification states that the amendments come into force from 1 July 2027.
- Among other changes, it addresses certain RDA/servings provisions and clarifies treatment of health supplements, nutraceuticals and FSDU in tablet/pill/capsule formats with respect to macronutrients where energy sources are insignificant.
- Labels should therefore be checked against the version applicable on the date of manufacture/marketing.
- Regulatory teams should maintain a controlled, current copy of regulations, amendments and directions.

18. Key takeaways

- Food labelling is a legal compliance requirement, not merely a marketing activity.
- Nutraceutical/health-supplement labels have additional category-specific declarations beyond general food labelling.
- Ingredient legality, level, nutrition declaration, warnings and claims must be reviewed together.
- Therapeutic/disease claims are a major compliance risk.
- Final artwork should pass a documented Regulatory/QA checklist before release.
- Always verify the latest FSSAI amendment, direction and effective date before approving a commercial label.

Penalties for Non-Compliance



Under the FSS Act, 2006

Misbranded food (Sec. 52): penalty up to Rs 3 lakh

Sub-standard food (Sec. 51): penalty up to Rs 5 lakh

Misleading advertisement / false description (Sec. 53): penalty up to Rs 10 lakh



Nutraceutical labelling violations

1st offence: fine up to Rs 25,000

2nd offence: fine up to Rs 50,000

Subsequent offence: not less than Rs 50,000, up to Rs 1,00,000 — or imprisonment up to 1 year, or both

Key Takeaways



Name, ingredient list and nutritional information are accurate and complete



FSSAI logo and 14-digit licence number appear on every package



Veg/non-veg mark and allergen “Contains” statement are present



Nutraceutical/health-supplement packs carry the category name, purpose, target group and RDA%



Dosage and recommended duration of use are stated where applicable



No claim anywhere implies prevention, cure or treatment of disease



Batch number, manufacture date and best-before/expiry date are printed



Labels are reviewed each year against the 1 July regulatory-amendment cycle



Thank You

Questions & Discussion

References & official sources

- Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 — FSSAI / Government of India.
- Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020 and amendments.
- Food Safety and Standards (Health Supplements, Nutraceuticals, FSDU, FSMP, Functional Food and Novel Food) Regulations, 2016 and applicable amendments/directions.
- Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018 and amendments.
- Food Safety and Standards (Vegan Foods) Regulations, 2022.
- FSSAI Labelling & Display amendments page — current regulatory status checked September 2026.
- FSSAI First Amendment Regulations, 2026 — notified 24 March 2026; effective 1 July 2027.