



FSSAI ISSUES ADVISORY PROHIBITING USE OF ASHWAGANDHA LEAVES IN FOOD PRODUCTS

On April 16th, 2026, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (“FSSAI”) issued an advisory bearing reference no. F. No. RCD-15001/11/2021-Regulatory-FSSAI (“FSSAI Advisory”) prohibiting the use of Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) leaves in crude, extract, or any other form in food products. Under Schedule IV of 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 (“FSSAI Regulations”) the FSSAI has specified the list of plants or botanicals permitted to be used in the food products in India. As per Schedule IV of the FSSAI Regulations only the use of Ashwagandha roots and their extracts as per the prescribed limits is permitted. However, since certain manufacturers are using Ashwagandha leaves and its extracts in their products, the FSSAI issued the FSSAI Advisory reinforcing that the use of Ashwagandha leaves in crude, extract, or any other form is not permitted under the FSSAI Regulations. Thus, all food business operators have been advised to comply with the FSSAI Advisory and the FSSAI Regulations, non-compliance with the same will lead to regulatory action under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and the regulations thereunder.

Earlier, along similar lines, the Ministry of AYUSH issued an advisory bearing reference no. T-13020/4/2022-DCC-Part (2) dated April 15th 2026, noting that despite an earlier directive in October, 2021, directing AYUSH drug manufacturers, exporters, sellers to not use Ashwagandha leaves either in crude or extract or any other form in AYUSH drugs/ products, certain manufacturers still continue to use Ashwagandha leaves in their products.

Accordingly, the Ministry of AYUSH directed all AYUSH drug/ product manufacturers, exporters, sellers to:

- Use only Ashwagandha roots in crude or extract or any other form in single or as an ingredient in compound AYUSH drugs/products.
- Not use Ashwagandha leaves, in crude, extract, or any other form, in AYUSH drugs/products.
- Ensure compliance with the provisions of Rule 161 of the Drugs Rules, 1945, which requires that the plant parts used in the drugs/products must be clearly mentioned on the label.

Read more:

<https://fssai.gov.in/upload/advisories/2026/04/69e0d84fcac2fAdvisory%20on%20non%20use%20of%20ashwagandha%20leaves%20in%20crude%20or%20extract%20or%20any%20other%20form%20in%20food%20products-%20reg.pdf>



This update is only for general informational purposes and shall not be construed to constitute legal advice (which can only be given after being formally engaged and familiarizing ourselves with all the relevant facts). Should you have any queries, or require any assistance or clarifications with regard to anything contained in this newsletter, please feel free to contact our partner, Mr. Pradnesh Warke

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