

Indian Maggi instant noodles 'unsafe and hazardous'

India's food regulator orders Nestle India to withdraw nine versions of noodles after state tests find high lead levels.

5 Jun 2015



Nestle in a statement said the noodles would be back in the Indian market as soon as the current situation is clarified [Reuters]

Laboratory tests have found overwhelming evidence that Nestle India's instant noodle products are "unsafe and hazardous" for human consumption, India's food safety regulator has said.

In a notice issued on Friday, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) also said it was evident that Nestle had failed to comply with its obligations under India's food safety laws.

While reserving the right to prosecute, the FSSAI issued a series of orders to Nestle, including withdrawing nine versions of its Maggi instant noodles and another product that was being sold without product approval.

Nestle India earlier said it had decided to take its popular brand of instant noodles off the shelves in the country after several Indian states banned it for allegedly containing unsafe levels of lead.

The company said in a statement that the trust of its consumers and the safety of products was its first priority, but added: "Maggi noodles are completely safe and have been trusted in India for over 30 years."

High lead levels

Several Indian states, including Uttarakhand, New Delhi, Gujarat and Indian-administered Kashmir, either ordered the withdrawal of Maggi noodles from shops or are carrying out further tests on samples before

taking action in conjunction with the federal government.

The statement said the Maggi noodles would be back in the Indian market as soon as the current situation is clarified.

Maggi sales have plunged in India since laboratory tests ordered by some state governments showed the noodles contained lead at levels far higher than legally allowed.

The tests also detected the chemical flavor enhancer monosodium glutamate, or MSG, which is not mentioned in the product's list of ingredients.

Maggi noodles are popular with school and college students and Nestle's "two-minute" advertising campaign stressing the ease of making the snack have made it a household name in India.

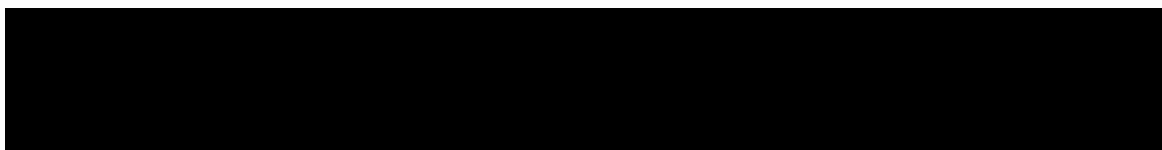
The noodles are Nestle's fastest-selling food item in the country, clocking about \$240m in sales annually.

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