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# Vitafoods India 2024 brings new vigour to India's nutraceutical market

Our Bureau, Mumbai

**V**ITAFOODS India 2024 held by Informa Markets in India, India's leading B2B exhibition organiser, has brought vigour to India's nutraceutical market uniting the entire nutraceutical supply chain under one roof and addressing

key industry trends, with a dedicated focus on the growing demand for personalised and customised nutraceutical solutions. With great fanfare, the three-day second edition of the expo opened at the Jio World Convention Center in Mumbai on February 13 and drew in a galaxy of prominent figures from the nutraceutical industry.

Vitafoods India to spotlight growth of sustainable nutraceutical products. As an integral part of the globally recognized Vitafoods brand, renowned for its presence in European and Asian markets, Vitafoods India 2024, is poised to set new benchmarks in the wellness industry. Vitafoods India, the only ded-

icated expo to showcase India's fast moving nutraceutical industry, emerged as a pivotal player, strategically designed for the Indian nutraceutical market, seizing the industry's growth, especially post-Covid-19. With a current valuation of approximately Rs. 33000 crore, India's nutraceutical market is

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# More two years gone, FSSAI yet to issue gazette notification lifting ban on methylcobalamin

Laxmi Yadav

It has been more than two years since the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) lifted a ban on methylcobalamin, also known as vitamin B12. However, the apex food regulator has yet to issue a gazette notification on the same, leaving nutraceutical manufacturers in a bind.

In 2021 FSSAI came out with a notification lifting the ban on methylcobalamin. The FSSAI banned methylcobalamin through a gazette issued in 2016. The product was later approved by the FSSAI's scientific committee in December 2019 based on scientific evidence of its safety.

"Methylcobalamin has been approved by the US FDA for use as a dietary supplement and is now listed on page 41 of the USP, but the FSSAI continues to ignore in-

dustry requests to release a gazette notification lifting the methylcobalamin ban," stated Dr Sanjay Agrawal, a leading pharmaceutical consultant.

Dr. Agrawal appealed to Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to direct the FSSAI to issue a gazette notification that would lift the ban on methylcobalamin, but to no avail.

Methylcobalamin is an essential nutrient to regulate certain vital bodily functions like cell multiplication, blood formation and protein synthesis.

Methylcobalamin has been used in clinical trials to treat some nutritional and other diseases, including Alzheimer's disease and rheumatoid arthritis. As an auxiliary agent, it protects neurons by promoting nerve regeneration and inhibiting glutamate-induced neurotoxicity. In

recent experimental and clinical studies, several lines of evidence have suggested that methylcobalamin may have analgesic properties. For example, methylcobalamin reduced pain behaviors in diabetic neuropathy, low back pain, and neuralgia. Methylcobalamin improved nerve conduction, accelerated nerve regeneration, and reduced ectopic spontaneous discharges of injured primary sensory neurons.

In the absence of a gazette notification, there are no guidelines for the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) or tolerable upper limit (TUL) of methylcobalamin-containing products. The domestic market is flooded with various brands of methylcobalamin with RDAs of up to 1500 mcg intended for prophylactic use. This is in contravention of the FSSAI's recommended RDA of 1 mcg, stated Dr Agrawal.

Once notified, the approved RDA value

can be defined scientifically based on available evidence, he added.

He had written to FSSAI time and again seeking clarification from it on easy availability of high doses of methylcobalamin in absence of the authority's gazette notification on removal of ban on the product.

In a communication to the pharmaceutical consultant on December 26, 2021, the FSSAI clarified that all vitamin B12 derivatives, including methylcobalamin, have been listed under the Food Safety and Standards (Health Supplements, Nutraceuticals, Food for Special Dietary Use, Food for Special Medical Purpose, Functional Foods, and Novel Foods) Regulations, 2016 through amendments notified on September 16, 2021. As a result, the food regulator has issued product licences for all vitamin B12 derivatives, including methylcobalamin.



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