Unlicensed body building supplements likely to face ban

Though the protein supplement is not banned, associations representing body builders and doctors said unlicensed brands could be selling spurious versions that could damage kidneys and cause other complications.

Creatine Monohydrate is used to increase strength and grow muscle tissue. It’s known to rapidly produce energy and support higher cellular function during training and competitions. (Getty Images)

Food safety officers in all states and Union Territories have been asked to stop the unlicensed sale of Creatine Monohydrate — a popular supplement used by body builders.

Though the protein supplement is not banned, associations representing body builders and doctors said unlicensed brands could be selling spurious versions that could damage kidneys and cause other complications. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, in a letter issued
on December 21, informed the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) in the states that Creatine Monohydrate was being manufactured and sold without necessary FSSAI licence. The activities are deemed illegal under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

Creatine Monohydrate is used to increase strength and grow muscle tissue. It’s known to rapidly produce energy and support higher cellular function during training and competitions. The substance is not banned by most body building or athletic organisations since its consumption is not considered doping. “We got several complaints that the supplement is being sold online and through Food Business Operators (FBOs) illegally, which increases the risk of duplicate or spurious product being passed on as well. We have served notices to several popular online shopping websites to remove supplements with this component,” said an FSSAI official.

Officials from FDA Maharashtra said they would soon start the crackdown on FBOs to prevent illegal manufacturing and sale. “We will go through the details and instructions of FSSAI and take necessary action,” Pallavi Darade, FDA commissioner, said.

Body building associations and doctors welcomed the move, saying the country needed a blanket ban on all supplements manufactured, sold or prescribed illegally to amateur or professional fitness enthusiasts. They added that this would aid their battle against doping and illegal sale.

“We are against any kind of performance enhancer or supplement as body building isn’t strictly dependent on intake of supplements. The issue is that so-called popular companies sell the supplements by bribing trainers and make huge profits,” said Chetan Pathare, general secretary of Indian Body Building Federation.