



Availability and Pricing of Essential Medicines

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The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) under the Department of Pharmaceuticals monitors the availability of drugs including generic drugs, identifies shortages, if any, and takes remedial steps to ensure availability of drugs to the consumers. As and when the reports of shortages of particular drug(s) in any part of the country are received through various sources including Price Monitoring and Resource Units set up in States (including Uttar Pradesh), NPPA coordinates with the State Government authorities and companies manufacturing the specific medicines to ensure that the shortages are addressed. During the last one year, NPPA, allowed a one-time increase in the ceiling prices of four medicines namely, Carboplatin Injection 10 mg/ml, Cisplatin Injection 1 mg/ml, Anti-Tetanus Immunoglobulin 250 IU and Anti-Tetanus Immunoglobulin 500IU by 50% based on the feedback received from public health authorities and companies regarding their severe shortages.

NPPA also monitors the compliance with the provisions of the DPCO, 2013 and takes appropriate action on cases of overcharging and other violations, in accordance with the provisions of DPCO, 2013. Till 31.03.2026, NPPA has initiated action in 2737 cases of overcharging. The detailed list of overcharging cases where demand notices have been issued is available on NPPA website (<https://nppa.gov.in>). Further, NPPA does not maintain state-wise record of overcharging by pharmaceutical companies.

Further, with an objective of making quality generic medicines available at affordable prices to all especially for the poor and the deprived ones, quality generic medicines are provided under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) of the Department through more than 20,000 dedicated outlets known as Jan Aushadhi Kendras (JAKs) at rates that are typically 50% to 80% cheaper than branded medicines. In order to address any supply gaps and ensure smooth supply and availability of affordable generic medicines at JAKs under PMBJP, the following measures are in place:

- (i) Since September 2024, stocking by JAKs of 200 commonly used medicines, consisting of the 100 top-selling medicines in the scheme product basket and 100 fast-selling medicines in the market, has been incentivised, under which JAK owners are eligible for monthly incentive based on the stocks that they maintain for these medicines.
- (ii) An end-to-end information-technology-enabled supply chain system is in place to connect a robust supply chain system consisting of five warehouses and a growing network of distributors across the country, currently numbering 42.
- (iii) In addition, with a view to ensure availability of commonly used products, 400 fast-moving products are monitored regularly by Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI), the scheme implementing agency, and demand for the same is estimated on a continuous basis. Further, steps have been taken to digitise the estimation method to augment the procurement process.

In addition, various other measures taken by the Government to improve the availability, affordability and accessibility of essential medicines across the country are as under:

- i. Under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) of the Department of Health and Family Welfare, health assurance/insurance cover of ₹5 lakh per family per year is provided for secondary or tertiary care hospitalisation, including for medicines.
- ii. Under the Free Drugs Service Initiative of the National Health Mission, essential medicines list recommended under the Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS) are made available free of any charge at public health facilities ranging from Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to district hospitals across the country.
- iii. Under the Amrit (Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment) initiative of the Department of Health and Family Welfare, affordable medicines are provided for the treatment of cancer, cardiovascular and other diseases, implants, surgical disposables and other consumables etc., at an average discount of up to 50% on market rates through AMRIT Pharmacy stores set up in number of hospitals and healthcare institutions.
- iv. Financial assistance is provided to poor patients belonging to families living below the poverty line, who suffer from major life-threatening diseases including cancer, under the umbrella scheme of Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi and the Health Minister's Discretionary Grant.

This information was given by Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilizers, Smt. Anupriya Patel, in a written reply in the Lok Sabha today.

PC/PM

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