

# Govt to sell 504 drugs under 'Jan Aushadhi'

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**New Delhi:** From July 1, you can walk up to a chemist and ask for a 'Jan Aushadhi' brand for your medicine, with the government set to launch its own brand to sell low cost generic medicines.

The Centre will procure medicines in bulk from public as well as private drug manufacturing firms and rebrand them under 'Jan Aushadhi'. These will be sold in the retail market at a competitive price, allowing consumers to buy a cheaper yet quality product from the government, official sources said.

To start with, the government has identified 504 essential medicines, which include antibiotics, painkillers, vitamins and medicines used in treatment of cardiovascular, respiratory diabetes and gastroenterology diseases. "In the first phase, we have mostly identified medicines from

## CURE FOR RISING DRUG PRICES?

- > Govt to sell medicines under own 'Jan Aushadhi' brand
- > 'Jan Aushadhi' branded medicines to be available at local chemists
- > Initially, 504 medicines to be launched on July 1
- > Medicines will be made available at 800 chemists across country in first phase
- > Govt to procure medicines from private players and brand them 'Jan Aushadhi'
- > Govt will do quality control and branding of medicines



the top 100 drugs based on their sales. More medicines as well as medical devices will be included in the second phase," an official in the know of developments told TOI.

In the first phase, these drugs will be made available to 800 select chemists, mostly across Delhi. However, the government plans to expand the reach to most metros by the end of the year.

The Bureau of Pharma Public Sector Undertakings

there are very few patented medicines sold in India, most of the medicines available in the market are branded products sold by private firms.

Pharmaceutical firms spend huge amounts in creating these brands. However, since prescription-based medicines cannot be promoted through advertisements, companies often push these brands through doctors and chemists. Consumers, who are often unable to make an informed choice for purchasing medicines, have to rely on the doctor's prescription or on chemists. The government's latest move providing an umbrella brand for generic drugs is aimed at enabling consumers to make that choice.

However, there are concerns on whether the government will be able to maintain and monitor quality of all products sold under this brand since they will be procured from different firms. Government officials say procurement norms and sampling will ensure quality control.

The government, along with BPPU, has held consultations with various stakeholders including pharmaceutical firms to ensure there is regular and adequate supply of medicines. The proposal has also been vetted by the doctor fraternity, bringing on board the Medical Council of India as well as the Indian Medical Association to ensure doctors prescribe Jan Aushadhi drugs. "Initially, the government had apprehensions that doctors would not support such a move because it may hurt the private sector. However, we have ensured them full support if the quality of products is maintained," IMA secretary general K K Aggarwal said. Once the brand is rolled out, the government also plans to make it mandatory for public hospitals to prescribe it wherever possible, an official said.

*Govt - Jan aushadhi.*