

# AMRIT store at AIIMS gives relief from expensive drugs

**HELP** Cancer and heart ailment medicines available at 56% to 90% cheaper price for whoever can show a prescription

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**NEW DELHI:** Medicines for cancer and heart diseases are being sold at prices that are 56% to 90% lesser than the MRP at India's first AMRIT (Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment) store at AIIMS.

The store, opened by HLL Lifecare Ltd (HLL) in collaboration with the Union health ministry on November 15 last year, procures and sells such medicines at minimal profit to everyone who produces a prescription, irrespective of their economic status.

People with prescriptions not being treated at AIIMS can also buy these medicines at a discounted price.

"The AMRIT store sells the drugs at heavy discounts because the purchasing price of such drugs, especially those for cancer, is much less than the MRP mentioned on the pack. We sell it for a minimal profit," said a HLL official who runs the store.

One of the beneficiaries of the cheap drugs is Ranjit Kumar Das, 58, who had a bypass surgery two years ago, and was at the store on ?? (when did he visit) to buy vasodilator medicines. "I need to have two tablets twice a day. I just bought two months worth of medicines. The drug is sold at a cheaper price here when compared to retail stores," he said.

A box of 50 tablets of the medicine, he said, cost him ₹58 at the AMRIT store, while it is priced at ₹590 in retail stores outside.

## AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

A look at the discounts being offered at AMRIT store

**DOCETAXEL**  
(Chemotherapy)

₹13,440

₹993

**PACLITAXEL**  
(Chemotherapy)

₹9,600

₹1,064

**TEMOZOLOMIDE**  
(stops the growth of cancer cells)

₹3,800

₹1,600

MRP

Price at AMRIT

**CABOPLATIN**  
(Chemotherapy)

₹2,561

₹1,316

**FILGRASTIM** (post chemotherapy to raise white blood cells)

₹2,392

₹267

"The store is open for everyone and the price is same for all. In fact, 10 - 15% of the people who come to the store are not being treated at AIIMS," the official said.

He said that the store dispersed medicines to around 100-150 patients everyday while catering to another 500 queries for various medicines. It is expected to see a five-fold increase in its sale over the next three months because of growing interest.

At present, the AMRIT store maintains a stock of more than 80 cancer medications and more than 60 medicines for heart disease and stroke.

The store, however, in its three months of being operational, has not sold a single implant as the affordable implants promised by AMRIT are not in stock.

"We provide implants on a need basis. They can be made available within 2 - 3 days. We will start stocking these implants in a month or so," said Dr M Ayyappan, chairman and managing director, HLL.

The AMRIT store is part of a nationwide programme launched by the Union government with the aim of making treatment for cancer and heart diseases more affordable. The ministry is planning to open 13 more AMRIT stores across the country, of which three would open in Delhi.

"The response so far has been overwhelming. This is an important programme of the Union ministry of health and family welfare. More AMRIT stores will come up in different states soon," said Union health minister JP Nadda.

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