

You could soon buy medicine online

Health Ministry Evaluating Proposal, Drug Quality Regulator Working On Norms

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New Delhi: As online shopping catches up, you could buy medicines too with the click of a mouse for which the health ministry is evaluating a proposal. The drug quality regulator is framing guidelines and mechanism to monitor such sale.

The proposal is expected to be taken up for discussion in the drugs consultative committee meeting next month, a senior drugs regulatory official said.

At present, the Drugs & Cosmetics Act does not allow sale of Schedule 'H' medicines without a doctor's prescription. In fact, even over-the-counter (OTC) pharmaceutical products can be sold only by licensed retailers.

However, off late various cases have been reported to the central drug regulator in which online retail platforms

- **Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) framing guidelines and mechanism to monitor online sale of medicines**
- **Proposal likely to be taken up for discussion in the Drugs Consultative Committee meet next month**
- **Government to consult states and study international models for online sale of medicines**
- **Indian pharmaceutical market is pegged at around ₹79,000-crore annually, growing around 20%**



GUIDELINES FOR SALE VIA WEB

to monitor such sale.

The central regulator is also consulting various international drug regulatory agencies such as the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the European Medicines

DCGI is consulting various international drug regulatory agencies like the US FDA and examining their models to understand how quality and standards of drugs sold online are monitored by them

cy and standards, monitoring the sale of medicines is also crucial because many drugs can be misused if not traded through prescription, experts say. Besides, there are certain medicines which are allowed with restrictions and if taken without proper prescription and supervision, it can lead to serious consequences.

The detailed proposal be-

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ing worked out by the government is likely to address these issues, while also specifying which medicines can be sold online.

The annual Indian pharmaceutical market is pegged at around Rs 79,000 crore, and is growing at around 20%. If the government decides to allow online sale of drugs, it is likely to give a major boost to the sales of the sector while also making medicines accessible to remote areas.

were found selling medicines. In the absence of guidelines, regulatory agencies are finding it difficult to track and monitor such sale. "With changing trends, it is important that we bring

Agency as well as examining their models to understand how quality and standards of medicines sold, through e-commerce portals are monitored by them, the official said. Apart from quality, effica-

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