

Centre's antibiotic drug policy within 3 months

New Delhi, Nov. 14: The government is likely to come out with a new policy governing the use of antibiotic drugs in the country within three months, the health ministry said on Sunday.

"We have set up a committee to look into it (antibiotic drug policy) and they are likely to come up with the recommendation in another three months," the minister of state for health and family welfare, Mr Dinesh Trivedi, told reporters here.

According to experts, excessive use of antibiotics could cause resistance among people, which would render drugs ineffective.

In an attempt to stop the abuse of antibiotics, the Drug Controller General of India has recently brought in new rules for the purchase of antibiotics. When you want to buy antibiotics,

11276
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you need to keep a copy of your prescription in the chemist's custody. Apart from this, a new schedule called HX will be added to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act to keep a check on antibiotics and habit forming drugs. "At the rate we're going we'll be resistant to all antibiotics in 15 years," said Dr Ranjit Roychaudhuri, a member of Rational Usage of Drugs.

In addition to developing resistance, antibiotics disrupt the normal bacterial flora in the bowel leading to a multitude of problems like

diarrhoea and flatulence.

There is now evidence to suggest that bowel disorders like ulcerative colitis and even cancer can be caused by antibiotics abuse.

Allergic reactions ranging from rash to shock, and suppression of body's immunity, are some of the other ill effects of antibiotic abuse. He said the ministry also plans to set up about 8,000 diagnostic centres at railway stations across India.

"The railway minister has given us permissions to set up diagnostic centres or kiosks at 8,000 railway stations in the country for diagnosing diabetes, blood pressure and other check-ups," he said.

Mr Trivedi said the railway ministry has also given land to the health and family welfare ministry to set up hospitals and clinics around the country. — Agencies

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