

TRADERS RAISE ALARM OVER RISE IN ESSENTIAL MEDICINES' PRICES

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The increase in prices of essential medicines, which are set to rise by almost 11% from 1 April, will hurt regular buyers of already expensive drugs for diabetes, cancer and blood pressure, chemists said.

On Saturday, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority raised the maximum price of around 800 drugs on the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) as part of an annual exercise.

"Based on the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) data provided by the office of the economic advisor, department of promotion of industry and internal trade, ministry of commerce and industry, the annual change in the WPI works out as 10.76607% during the calendar year 2021 over the corresponding year 2020," said an NPPA note that Mint reported on Saturday.

"Already, medicines are expensive and that too, 10% price hike in medicine from 1 April will directly impact consumers. We are wholesalers, and if we get the medicines at higher prices, retailers will ultimately sell the medicines at a high price. Chemists will not be able to give a discount to the customer on the purchase," said Delhi Drugs Trader Association secretary Ashish Grover.

The NLEM list includes antibiotics, anti-inflammatory, ear-nose and throat medicines, antiseptics, painkillers, gastrointestinal medicines and antifungals.

"In my opinion, pharma trade has increased in the last two years, but wholesale and retail trade and offline shops are badly affected by 30-40% because of online pharmacy shops," added Grover.

Pharmaceutical Raw Material Dealers' Association secretary Deepak Bansal said costlier raw materials would drive up medicine prices.

"There are certain drugs for which we import raw material and excipients from other countries," Bansal said.

"Already, their prices have gone up by 15-20% in the last few days. Now, manufacturers will take advantage of this NPPA notification and raise the prices by 10%, putting an extra financial burden on the common man," he added.

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