

## Government launches Universal Immunization Program in 8 states

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As per the information given by the Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Mr Abu Hasem Khan Choudhury in the parliament on April 23, 2013, "The pentavalent vaccination drive for infants under the Universal Immunization Program (UIP) of government of India has been started in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka and Puducherry.

The vaccine is given at the age of 6 weeks, 10 weeks and 14 weeks of age to infants (total 3 doses). Pentavalent vaccine protects against Diphtheria- Pertussis-Tetanus, Hepatitis B, and Haemophilus influenza-B.

Pentavalent vaccine is provided as commodity assistance by Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) through United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

Several states like Assam, Rajasthan, Delhi, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal have made request to the Government of India for introduction of Pentavalent vaccine in their state. However, no decision has been taken by the government in this regard.