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Government launches Rotavirus vaccine as part of Universal Immunization Programme

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"We have achieved a new milestone towards expanding the coverage of full immunization in the country aimed at reducing child mortality". Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare stated this at the national launch of the Rotavirus vaccine as part of the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) of the country.

Terming this as an historic moment and an exemplary step in India's immunization programme, the Union Health Minister added that the Government is committed to reducing morbidity and mortality in children. Strengthening routine immunization is an essential investment in India's children and will ensure a healthy future of the country, he noted.

Noting that Rotavirus is one of the leading causes of severe diarrhoea and death among children less than five years of age, and that every year nearly 80,000 to one lakh children die in the country due to Rotavirus diarrhoea, and about 9 lakh children are admitted to hospital due to episodes of severe diarrhoea with 32.7 lakh cases of OPD, Shri Nadda stated that introduction of Rotavirus vaccine will enable us to directly address the problem of diarrheal deaths.

The vaccine is being introduced initially in four states i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Odisha and will be expanded to the entire country in a phased manner.

"Adding this life-saving vaccine to our immunization program will not only improve the health of our children but also reduce hospitalization and other conditions associated with diarrhea due to Rotavirus such as malnutrition, delayed physical and mental development among children. Reduced hospitalization reduces the economic burden on the family and the health cost burden on the country", Shri Nadda said. He further stated that the Rotavirus vaccine has been developed indigenously, under a public-private partnership by the Ministry of Science and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. This therefore is a landmark achievement under 'Make in India' initiative, he stated.

Shri Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak, MoS (I/C), Health & Family Welfare, Odisha, congratulated the Health Ministry for introducing Rotavirus vaccine in the UIP. He said that this will have tremendous impact in the health program of the country. He further emphasized the attention to quality by the Odisha Government in all its RCH initiatives.

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