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India-made typhoid vaccine hits the market

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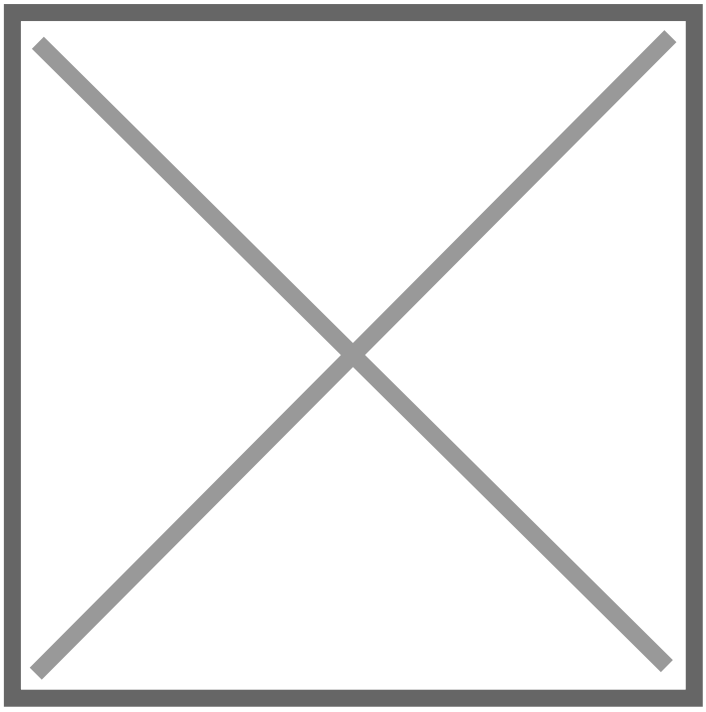

Typbar Vi, a typhoid vaccine manufactured by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International, has been released in the market. This is the first indigenously made typhoid vaccine. Four other companies are marketing typhoid vaccines imported from China, Cuba and Russia.

Over 60 lakh cases of typhoid fever occur annually in India. Worldwide, there are over 160 lakh typhoid cases reported annually leading to 600,000 deaths. The fever is caused by the virus Salmonella typhi which thrives in contaminated water and food articles.

" The viral strain of Salmonella typhi Ty2 to make the vaccine was made available by Dr John Robbins of the National Institute of Health in the US," said Bharat Biotech chairman and managing director Krishna M Ella. Dr Robbins is the father of polysaccharide vaccine, the family to which Typbar Vi belongs. The vaccine was formally launched by Karnataka chief minister SM Krishna in Bangalore in early May.

Typbar Vi is a single dose injectible vaccine. It is being manufactured at Bharat Biotech's world class production facility in the Genome Valley on Hyderabad's outskirts. Company officials said each vaccine dose may cost Rs 175. Efforts are on to reduce the price further to about Rs 100. Bharat Biotech also plans to rope in voluntary organizations, health care agencies and other non-governmental organizations to organize large scale immunization programs in urban areas (mainly slum segments) which were vulnerable to typhoid fever due to unhygienic conditions.