

## 'All medicines are essential'

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According to a report by the standing committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers tabled in Parliament, all medicines, including life saving drugs, should be available in the market at an affordable cost. The panel has recommended expanding the scope of price control to cover all medicines available in the country.

Currently, drug price regulator National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has fixed the prices of 509 formulation packs based on National List of Essential Medicines.

"The committee was surprised to know that all medicines are not listed in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM). The committee are of the view that all medicines are essential and is taken only when it is needed by the patient," said the report on the Department of Pharmaceuticals.

The panel further said, in a statement, "All these medicines, including life saving drugs, should be available in the market at affordable cost. To keep this in view, the committee recommend that the scope of price control needs to be enlarged to make all the drugs available, especially life saving drugs, in all parts of the country."