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Daily Drug Regimen for treatment of Tuberculosis introduced by health ministry

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The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has recently announced the launch of daily regimen for TB patients across the country under The Revised National TB Control Programme (RNTCP).

The ministry has been providing the thrice weekly regimen for the treatment of tuberculosis (TB), however it has now decided to change the treatment strategy for TB patients from thrice weekly to daily drug regimen using fixed dose combinations (FDC) for treatment.

This change will bring transformation in the approach and the intensity to deal with this disease which accounts for about 4.2 lakh deaths every year.

Depending upon the convenience of patient and practitioner free of cost, the daily FDC anti-TB drugs will be made available to private pharmacy or at private practitioners to dispense to TB patients who seek care in private sector.

Current WHO Global TB Report, 2017 has reported that incidence of TB has reduced from 28.2 lakh to 27 lakh and mortality by 60 thousand over the last one year, which is a testimony of anti TB drive by Government of India.

The Health Ministry will take this forward with all major hospitals, IMA, IAP and other professional medical associations to expand the access to daily FDC to all TB patients.

The salient features of this treatment strategy are use of Ethambutol in continuation phase for all patients, drugs to be given daily (as against only 3 times weekly previously), fixed dose combination (FDC) tablets to be used which will reduce pill burden (as against separate 7 tablets previously), for children, child friendly formulations as dispersible tablets and use of Information Technology (IT) enabled treatment adherence support system.