

News Details

India makes cheap typhoid vaccine

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An Indian biotechnology firm has launched a cheaper vaccine for typhoid and said two more vaccines for rabies and brain fever would hit the market within four months.

Bharat Biotech said its "Typbar" single shot vaccine, on sale for 175 rupees (\$A5.80), was the first of its kind to be made in India.

"All the other vaccines available in the country are being imported and cost about 200 rupees," said Krishna Ella, chairman of Bharat Biotech. "In the coming days our plan is to reduce the price further to 100 rupees."

There are about 16 million cases of typhoid and 600,000 deaths worldwide every year. India accounts for about six million cases, Ella said.

The market for the vaccine in India is estimated to be in the region of 270 million rupees and Bharat Biotech is aiming to rake in about 150 million rupees in the first year of the launch.

"With low awareness of the disease there is a big opportunity for the market to grow," Ella said.

The firm plans to make about 50 million units of the vaccine, he said.

"The vaccine took two years to develop and we were assisted by the National Institute of Health of the US. An investment of 170 million rupees went into producing the vaccine," Ella said.

"Vaccines for rabies and brain fever are in the pipeline. In another three to four months time they will hit the market," he said.

Bharat Biotech is 82 percent owned by individuals including Ella with the rest is owned by financial institutions.

It launched a Hepatitis B vaccine in 1998.