

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-2778
ANSWERED ON – 25.03.2025

REDUCING IMPORT DUTY ON LIFESAVING DRUGS

2778. MS. SUSHMITA DEV:

Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is any plan to reduce import duties on lifesaving medical equipment to ensure affordability and accessibility in the healthcare sector, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the measures undertaken to offer tax incentives to domestic manufacturers of lifesaving medical equipment to reduce dependency on imports;
- (c) whether Government is considering to reduce GST rates on lifesaving and essential medical devices to make them more affordable, particularly for low-income populations; and
- (d) the details of steps taken by Government to reduce GST on health and life insurance premiums?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE
(SHRI PANKAJ CHAUDHARY)

(a): There is no such proposal. Most medical devices attract Basic Customs Duty (BCD) ranging from 7.5% to 10%. However, several medical equipment attracts NIL BCD. The details of such equipment at NIL rate are enclosed in **Annexure**.

(b) and (c): Most medical instruments and equipment already attract a concessional GST rate of 12% against the standard rate of 18%. GST rates and exemptions are prescribed on the recommendations of the GST Council which is a constitutional body consisting of representatives from both Union and State/UT Governments. There is no such recommendation of the GST Council.

(d): GST rates and exemptions on all goods and services are prescribed on the recommendations of the GST Council which is a Constitutional body comprising of members from both the Union and State/UT Governments. Based on the recommendation of the GST Council in the 54th meeting held on 09.09.2024, a Group of Ministers (GoM) on Life and Health Insurance has been constituted to holistically look into the issues pertaining to GST on life insurance and health insurance. The GoM has not yet submitted its final report.

Refer to reply of part (a) of the Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2778 for answer on 25-03-2025

List of Medical Equipment/Devices attracting NIL Basic Customs Duty

- Coronary stents and coronary stent systems for use with cardiac catheters
- Endovascular stents
- Artificial Heart (left ventricular assist device)
- Portable X-ray machine / system
- Assistive devices, rehabilitation aids and the following goods for disabled:-
 - i. Braille writers and braille writing instruments
 - ii. Hand writing equipment Braille Frames, Slates, Writing Guides, Script Writing Guides, Styli, Braille Erasers
 - iii. Canes, Electronic aids like the Sonic Guide
 - iv. Optical, Environmental Sensors
 - v. Arithmetic aids like the Taylor Frame (arithmetic and algebra types), Cubarythm, Speaking or Braille calculator
 - vi. Geometrical aids like combined Graph and Mathematical Demonstration Board, Braille Protractors, Scales, Compasses and Spar Wheels
 - vii. Electronic measuring equipment, such as callipers, micrometres, comparators, gauges, gauge blocks Levels, Rules, Rulers and Yardsticks
 - viii. Drafting, Drawing aids, tactile displays
 - ix. Specially adapted clocks and watches
 - x. Orthopaedic appliances
 - xi. Wheelchairs
 - xii. Artificial electronic larynx and spares thereof
 - xiii. Artificial electronic ear (Cochlear implant)
 - xiv. Talking books (in the form of cassettes, discs or other sound reproductions) and large print books, braille embossers, talking calculators, talking thermometers
 - xv. Equipment for the mechanical or the computerized production of braille and recorded material such as braille computer terminals and displays, electronic braille, transfer and pressing machines and stereo typing machines
 - xvi. Braille paper
 - xvii. All tangible appliances including articles, instruments, apparatus, specially designed for use by the blind
 - xviii. Aids for improving mobility of the blind such as electronic orientation and obstacle detection appliance and white canes
 - xix. Technical aids for education, rehabilitation, vocational training and employment of the blind such as braille typewriters, braille watches, teaching and learning aids, games and other instruments and vocational aids specifically adapted for use of the blind
 - xx. Assistive listening devices, audiometers
 - xxi. External catheters, special jelly cushions to prevent bed sores, stair lift, urine collection bags
 - xxii. Implants for severely physically handicapped patients including bone cement