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MED DATA BOOST - Report drug side-effects on govt toll-free helpline

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New Delhi:

Now, consumers can call to directly report adverse reactions or their bad experiences from any medicine.

The health ministry has launched a toll-free number where people can call and report the side-effects and problems faced by them along with details of the medicine suspected to have caused the adverse reaction.

The information received would be then screened and assessed by the Adverse Drug Reaction Monitoring Centers by using international parameters set by World Health Organisation (WHO), a senior official said.

Thereafter, the analyzed information would be forwarded to the national coordinating centre, which maintains a database for adverse drug reactions (ADRs).

The health ministry has also set up a steering committee which will periodically review the data and suggest any intervention that may be required, the official said.

The government would also share this database with international agencies including WHO, which manages the Global Pharmacovigilance Database.

The ministry also plans to make it mandatory for pharmacists, hospitals and other independent clinics to display the toll-free number - 18001803024 - in public interest.

The idea is to empower consumers to report adverse reactions on their own. The move would also enable an environment that will allow reportage of adverse reactions from every nook and corner of the country .

Surveillance of medicine, after it is approved for marketing, has been a major challenge for the government and the drug regulator. In the absence of enough field force and mechanism, the regulator often struggles to gather post-marketing data on medicines.