

India Over The Counter Drugs Market By Product Type (Cold, Cough & Flu, Vitamins, Minerals & Supplements (VMS), Analgesics, Gastrointestinal Products, Dermatology Products, Others), By Route of Administration (Oral, Parenteral, Topical, Others), By Dosage Form (Tablets, Capsules, Liquids & Solutions, Cream/Lotion/Ointments, Others), By Distribution Channel (Retail Pharmacy, Hospital Pharmacy, E-Pharmacy), By Region, Competition, Forecast & Opportunities, 2020-2030F

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Abstracts

India Over The Counter Drugs Market was valued at USD 5677.32 Million in 2024 and is anticipated to project impressive growth in the forecast period with a CAGR of 7.13% through 2030. The India Over The Counter (OTC) drugs market is experiencing robust growth driven by several key factors. Increasing consumer awareness about self-medication options and accessibility of OTC drugs through pharmacies and online platforms are major drivers. OTC drugs provide convenience for managing minor ailments such as headaches, colds, and allergies without the need for a prescription, which appeals to a wide demographic. The expanding middle-class population with higher disposable incomes is contributing to increased spending on healthcare products, including OTC drugs. Government initiatives promoting healthcare accessibility and affordability, coupled with favorable regulatory reforms simplifying OTC drug approvals, are also fostering market expansion. Manufacturers are responding by innovating products with improved formulations, packaging, and marketing strategies to capture a larger market share. As healthcare infrastructure continues

As health awareness develops and consumer health literacy grows, the India OTC drugs market is poised for continued growth and evolution in the coming years.

Key Market Drivers

Increasing Awareness for Self-Medication Drives Market Growth

Self-medication is the practice of taking medications, to treat self-diagnosed symptoms, without getting a Doctor's prescription otherwise on one's own initiative or on the recommendation of another individual. Easy access, availability and awareness are nowadays the most common reason behind practicing self-medication. Self-medication is being practiced frequently in India and is practiced most among the middle-class family. This self-medication trend is anticipated to drive the cough and cold, gastrointestinal, analgesics, multivitamins and dermatological segment of the Over The Counter (OTC) Drugs in the country. The most frequent usage of Over The Counter (OTC) Drugs is in Fever, Headaches, Toothache, acne, constipation, Musculoskeletal pains and Cold, Cough & Flu. People are more relying on this self-medication as it is time saving, often based on previous recommendation as well as the need for faster relief thus driving the market growth by increasing dependency and reach for the Over The Counter (OTC) Drug Market. According to an article published titled, "Prevalence, Pattern, and Reasons for Self-Medication: A Community-Based Cross-Sectional Study From Central India", self-medication was prevalent in 60% of the area studied. The most frequently used medications for self-medication were analgesics and antipyretics. Common ailments prompting self-medication included fever, body aches, common cold, and cough. Female participants were observed to self-medicate twice as often as male participants. Moreover, individuals with education beyond high school were more likely to self-medicate compared to those with less than a high school education. The primary reasons cited for self-medication in this study were time efficiency and the perception that the condition did not necessitate a visit to a physician.

Rise in Disease Prevalence among the Geriatric Population

The increase of disease prevalence among the growing elderly geriatric population is a measure that is expanding the Over The Counter (OTC) Drug market demand. The dependency on several Over The Counter (OTC) products like Laxatives, Cold, Cough and Flu along with mild analgesics and pain reliever ointments for the geriatric population, is a major reason for the increased demand. Nowadays, due to rising frequency of several old age health issues many Over The Counter (OTC) drugs such

as pain reliever and ointments are directly related to their comfort and independency for carrying their everyday lifestyle, thus indirectly maintaining the continuous demand and thus expanding their Over The Counter (OTC) Drug market.

Increasing cases of Cough Cold & Flu, Body aches and various other Recurring Health Issues in India

During the pandemic the increased prevalence of Cold Cough, Fever, Body aches and severe other similar symptoms along with the fear of contracting the virus had led to increased demand of these Over The Counter drugs. These Over The Counter (OTC) Drugs as a means for need of self-medication and as preventing measure is automatically shifting the demand towards the India Over The Counter (OTC) Drug market. Easily accessible drugs in pharmacies such as analgesics, antibiotics, anti-diarrheal agents, antipyretics, cough-suppressants, Vitamins & Mineral supplements (VMS) being cost efficient and having preventive effects during the pandemic were most in demand thus boosting the Over The Counter (OTC) Drug Market.

Launch of New & Updated Customer Centric products accelerates growth of Over The Counter (OTC) Drug

Launching updated products of new formulations of various traditional Over The Counter (OTC) drugs such as alcohol, dye free, honey containing cough or cold oral liquids, sedative free cold and cough formulations, Raft forming oral suspensions, oral and topical analgesics, naturally extracted acne treatment creams and lotions is gaining customers faith for lesser side effects and more consumption thereby increasing the market demand. Also, the usage of various Vitamins and Minerals Supplements (VMS) in distinct formulations brings more to the health-conscious community thus gaining more traction toward the Over The Counter (OTC) Drug market. Also, along with the user's choice mostly in the dermatology and Vitamins and minerals Supplements (VMS) segment has reached out reliance and popularity on the online consumers thus foreseeing for a boost in the upcoming future of the Over The Counter (OTC) Drug market.

Key Market Challenges

Regulatory Complexity and Compliance

A significant challenge in the India OTC drugs market is the regulatory complexity and compliance requirements governing the sale and distribution of pharmaceutical

products. OTC drugs are subject to stringent regulations by regulatory bodies such as the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) and state drug authorities. The regulatory framework includes requirements for product registration, labeling, quality standards, and advertising restrictions.

Compliance with regulatory standards adds the time and cost involved in bringing OTC drugs to market. Manufacturers must navigate a complex approval process that includes submission of clinical data, stability studies, and proof of safety and efficacy. Delays in regulatory approvals and inconsistent enforcement of regulations across states create barriers to market entry and expansion, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and new market entrants. Regulatory reforms and amendments to OTC drug regulations can impact market dynamics and require manufacturers to adapt quickly to changing compliance requirements. Addressing regulatory challenges requires collaboration between industry stakeholders, regulatory authorities, and policymakers to streamline approval processes, clarify guidelines, and ensure adherence to quality standards while promoting innovation in the OTC drugs sector.

Counterfeit and Substandard Products

The prevalence of counterfeit and substandard OTC drugs poses a significant challenge to the India market, compromising patient safety, eroding consumer trust, and undermining market integrity. Counterfeit drugs may contain incorrect active ingredients, incorrect dosage levels, or lack of active ingredients altogether, posing serious health risks to consumers. Substandard products may fail to meet quality standards, affecting efficacy and reliability. The proliferation of counterfeit OTC drugs is exacerbated by inadequate enforcement of intellectual property rights, weak supply chain controls, and illicit manufacturing and distribution networks. Counterfeiters exploit gaps in regulatory oversight and engage in illicit practices such as product diversion, unauthorized manufacturing, and falsification of packaging and labeling.

To combat counterfeit drugs, stakeholders across the supply chain, including manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and regulatory authorities, must collaborate on implementing robust anti-counterfeiting measures. Technologies such as track-and-trace systems, serialization, holographic labels, and blockchain can enhance supply chain transparency and traceability, enabling rapid detection and removal of counterfeit products from circulation. Public awareness campaigns, pharmacist training programs, and consumer education initiatives are also critical in educating the public about the risks of counterfeit drugs and promoting vigilant purchasing behaviors. Strengthening

regulatory enforcement, imposing stringent penalties for counterfeiters, and enhancing cooperation with international agencies are essential steps in safeguarding the integrity of the India OTC drugs market.

Key Market Trends

Expansion of Online Retail Channels

The rapid growth of e-commerce platforms is revolutionizing the distribution and accessibility of OTC drugs in India. Online retail channels have emerged as major avenues for consumers to purchase healthcare products conveniently from the comfort of their homes. This trend has been accelerated by increasing smartphone penetration, internet connectivity, and digital payment systems across urban and rural areas. E-commerce platforms offer a wide range of OTC drugs, including pharmaceuticals, dietary supplements, personal care products, and medical devices. They provide consumers with easy access to product information, customer reviews, and competitive pricing, enhancing transparency and convenience in purchasing decisions. Manufacturers and retailers are leveraging online retail channels to expand their market reach, improve distribution efficiency, and engage directly with consumers through targeted marketing campaigns and personalized recommendations. In August 2020, Amazon, the prominent online retail company, introduced an internet pharmacy in India, marking its foray into the country's digital medicine market. Amazon Pharmacy is initially launching in Bangalore and may expand to other Indian cities as part of a trial phase. This strategic move coincides with a significant surge in the online pharmaceutical sector amid the global coronavirus pandemic. In recent times, major US technology firms have made substantial investments amounting to billions of dollars in the Indian economy, underscoring the growing significance of the digital and e-commerce sectors within the country.

Demand for Natural and Herbal Products

There is a growing preference among Indian consumers for natural and herbal OTC products perceived as safer and more aligned with holistic health principles. Herbal remedies, Ayurvedic formulations, and traditional medicines are gaining popularity due to their perceived efficacy, minimal side effects, and cultural relevance. Consumers are increasingly seeking OTC drugs derived from natural ingredients for managing common health concerns such as immunity boosting, stress relief, and skincare.

The demand for natural and herbal OTC products is driven by a shift towards wellness-

focused lifestyles and growing distrust towards synthetic chemicals in conventional medications. Manufacturers are responding by developing innovative formulations, conducting clinical studies to validate efficacy claims, and obtaining regulatory approvals to market herbal products as OTC drugs. Collaborations with traditional medicine practitioners and endorsements from celebrities and influencers further enhance consumer confidence and adoption of natural OTC remedies.

Segmental Insights

Product Type Insights

Based on the Product Type, cold, cough & flu medications have asserted their dominance in the India Over The Counter Drugs Market primarily due to their indispensability in managing prevalent respiratory infections across diverse demographics and geographic regions. India's varied climatic conditions contribute to a year-round prevalence of respiratory ailments, including the common cold, cough, and influenza, with seasonal spikes intensifying demand during winter and monsoon seasons. This consistent demand is met by a wide array of OTC medications offering relief from symptoms such as nasal congestion, sore throat, coughing, and fever. Consumers increasingly favor self-medication for minor health issues, appreciating the accessibility and immediate relief provided by these medications without the necessity of a prescription. Pharmaceutical companies continually innovate within this category, introducing new formulations and delivery methods that enhance efficacy and user experience. The extensive availability of Cold, Cough & Flu medications through retail pharmacies, online platforms, and supermarkets further bolsters accessibility, ensuring consumers can readily procure these essential remedies. Despite challenges such as regulatory compliance and price sensitivity, the category's resilience is underscored by strategic marketing campaigns, robust supply chain management, and ongoing consumer education efforts. As such, Cold, Cough & Flu medications remain pivotal in shaping consumer healthcare choices and driving significant growth within the OTC drugs sector in India.

Route of Administration Insights

Based on Route of Administration, the Oral route of administration stands out as the preeminent category, exerting substantial influence over consumer preferences, market dynamics, and ongoing product innovation within the OTC sector. This dominance is underpinned by a convergence of critical factors that collectively underscore the widespread acceptance, convenience, and therapeutic efficacy of oral medications

among Indian consumers.

The dominance of oral medications is rooted in their unparalleled accessibility and ease of administration. Unlike other routes of administration that may require specialized medical supervision or equipment, oral formulations such as tablets, capsules, and syrups are readily accessible to consumers across urban and rural areas alike. This accessibility aligns seamlessly with the increasing trend towards self-care and self-medication practices among Indian consumers, who value the convenience of being able to manage common health issues independently. The extensive product range available within the oral medications category further reinforces its dominance.

Pharmaceutical companies continually innovate and diversify their offerings to encompass a wide spectrum of therapeutic indications, ranging from pain relief and fever management to digestive health, allergy treatment, and nutritional supplementation. This diversity caters to the varied health needs and preferences of consumers, enhancing the category's relevance and appeal in addressing a multitude of everyday health concerns.

Regional Insights

The Southern region of India emerges as a dominant force in the country's Over The Counter (OTC) drugs market, showcasing robust growth and influencing market dynamics significantly. Several factors contribute to the Southern region's prominence in this sector. The Southern states of India, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala, boast a dense population with high levels of healthcare awareness and literacy. The region is home to major metropolitan areas like Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kochi, which serve as hubs for healthcare infrastructure and pharmaceutical distribution. These urban centers not only cater to large local populations but also attract patients from neighboring regions seeking specialized medical care and access to a wide range of OTC medications.

The Southern region benefits from a strong network of retail pharmacies and healthcare facilities. Chain pharmacies, independent pharmacies, and hospital pharmacies are well-established across urban and semi-urban areas, ensuring convenient access to OTC drugs for consumers. Pharmacies in the Southern region often offer personalized services, including pharmacist consultations and health advice, which enhance consumer trust and satisfaction. The Southern states have historically shown higher healthcare expenditure per capita compared to other regions in India. This economic factor contributes to increased consumer spending on healthcare products, including OTC medications, thereby driving market demand and growth within the Southern

region.

Key Market Players

%II%Cipla Limited

%II%Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd.

%II%Lupin Limited

%II%GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals Limited

%II%Dabur India Limited

%II%Abbott India Limited

%II%Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd.

%II%Emami Limited

%II%Reckitt (India) Ltd.

%II%Johnson & Johnson Pvt. Ltd.

Report Scope:

In this report, the India Over The Counter Drugs Market has been segmented into the following categories, in addition to the industry trends which have also been detailed below:

%II%India Over The Counter Drugs Market, By Product Type:

Cold, Cough & Flu

Vitamins, Minerals & Supplements (VMS)

Analgesics

Gastrointestinal Products

Dermatology Products

Others

%II%India Over The Counter Drugs Market, By Route of Administration:

Oral

Parenteral

Topical

Others

%II%India Over The Counter Drugs Market, By Dosage Form:

Tablets

Capsules

Liquids & Solutions

Cream/Lotion/Ointments

Others

%II%India Over The Counter Drugs Market, By Distribution Channel:

Retail Pharmacy

Hospital Pharmacy

E-Pharmacy

India Over The Counter Drugs Market, By Region:

North

South

West

East

Competitive Landscape

Company Profiles: Detailed analysis of the major companies present in the India Over The Counter Drugs Market.

Available Customizations:

India Over The Counter Drugs Market report with the given market data, TechSci Research offers customizations according to a company's specific needs. The following customization options are available for the report:

Company Information

Detailed analysis and profiling of additional market players (up to five).

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