

Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024

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The Department of Pharmaceuticals issued the Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024.



[Ref: businesstoday]

Key Highlights of UCPMP 2024:

- **Drug Information Requirements:** Information about drugs must be balanced, up-to-date, verifiable, and must not mislead either directly or by implication.
- **Claims and Comparison Restrictions:** Usage of other companies' brand names without consent is prohibited. Comparisons must be factual, fair, and substantiable.
 - The word "**safe**" must not be used without qualification, and "**new**" should not describe drugs available or promoted in India for more than a year.
- **Promotion Regulations:** Promotional materials must not disguise their real nature. Details on how drugs should be promoted in texts and the audio-visual market are specified.
- **Education and Interaction Standards:** Continuing Medical Education is permitted only through clear, transparent guidelines.
 - Relationships with healthcare professionals must **avoid gifts, monetary grants, or any pecuniary advantage**.
- **Ethics and Compliance:** Establishment of an Ethics Committee for Pharma Marketing Practices in each association and at pharmaceutical companies.
 - The responsibility for adherence to the code lies with the **company's Chief Executive Officer**.
- **Prohibitions and Requirements:** Bans on offering gifts and travel facilities to healthcare professionals or their family members, using inducements for gaining interviews or access to healthcare professionals, and supplying free samples to unqualified individuals.
 - Companies must maintain records of **free samples** and ensure their value **does not exceed two percent** of domestic sales per year.
- **Implementation and Oversight:** Pharmaceutical associations must set up a dedicated UCPMP portal and take necessary steps for code implementation.
 - Penalties for violations and procedures for **handling complaints are outlined**. The ECPMP ensures accountability and oversight.

Need for UCPMP:

- **Ensuring Patient Safety:** Prevents unethical marketing practices that can adversely affect patient safety by misrepresenting drug risks or benefits.
- **Promoting Responsible Innovation:** Directs resources towards addressing genuine medical needs, avoiding misallocation due to misleading drug promotions.
- **Upholding Professional Integrity:** Maintains the integrity of healthcare professionals by ensuring prescriptions are based on unbiased and accurate drug information.