

Quote by Sunita Mohanty, Managing Director, Primus Partners

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Union Budget 2026: Which 17 cancer drugs are now exempt from customs duty? Check list

Union Budget 2026: Most of the medicines in the list are part of modern oncology care, including immunotherapy, targeted therapy, and cell-based treatments.

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Article Content:

Union Budget 2026: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her ninth budget, announced an exemption of basic customs duty on 17 drugs or medicines. This will provide considerable financial relief to patients and their families, considering the high cost of cancer treatment and drugs in the country.

Most of the medicines are part of modern oncology care, including immunotherapy, targeted therapy, and cell-based treatments.

List of 17 cancer drugs exempt from customs duty:

1. Ribociclib
2. Abemaciclib
3. Talycabtagene autoleucel
4. Tremelimumab
5. Venetoclax
6. Ceritinib
7. Brigatinib
8. Darolutamide
9. Toripalimab
10. Serplulimab
11. Tislelizumab

12. Inotuzumab ozogamicin
13. Ponatinib
14. Ibrutinib
15. Dabrafenib
16. Trametinib
17. Ipilimumab

Healthcare experts see this as a welcome move. Suraj Punjabi, co-founder of Medicine Walla, said that the exemption on 17 cancer drugs is a “patient-centric decision that will help reduce treatment costs at the retail level and enhance access to critical medicines”. “Such measures strengthen last-mile healthcare delivery and support community pharmacies in serving patients better,” he said.

Avik Chauhan, Cluster Chief Operating Officer at HCG Cancer Centre, said the exemption of basic customs duty on 17 cancer drugs and the inclusion of additional rare diseases for import duty relief will “significantly ease the financial burden on patients, together improving long-term outcomes for chronic and cancer patients alike”. “We are encouraged by initiatives that aim to improve affordability, accelerate clinical research, and enhance the overall quality of care for cancer patients nationwide,” said Chauhan.

India’s growing burden of non-communicable diseases like diabetes, cancer and autoimmune disorders is a wake-up call for the private sector, said Sunita Mohanty, Managing Director, Primus Partners. “The Union Budget’s focus on NCDs sends a strong message to FMCG, food, beverage, and pharmaceutical companies to move beyond mere compliance and become strong partners in public health through clear front-of-pack labelling, healthier reformulations, and more responsible business practices,” said Mohanty.