



# 1. Supreme Court postponed its final verdict on the ban of oxytocin usage in India

- What is oxytocin? Why is it vital?
- Why is retail sale of oxytocin banned in India?
- Does milk from such cattle hurt humans?
- If oxytocin doesn't hurt, why the ban?

**GS paper 2 (Government policies and interventions for development of various sectors and issues arising out)**



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**In this video, you can find detailed answers for all the above questions.**

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## What is the context about?



The final decision on whether the government can block private pharmaceutical companies from manufacturing and selling vital pregnancy drug oxytocin in India has been postponed. The Supreme Court told that, the issue needs further deliberation.



The health ministry in April 2018 notified a ban on private firms from manufacturing and selling oxytocin, stating that it wanted to restrict the responsibility of supplying the drug to a Karnataka-based public sector manufacturer to avoid its misuse in the veterinary field.



## What is oxytocin? Why is it vital?



Oxytocin, also known as the ‘love hormone’, is a hormone secreted by the pituitary glands of mammals during sex, childbirth, lactation or social bonding. However, it can also be chemically manufactured and is sold by pharma companies for use during childbirth. It is administered either as an injection or a nasal solution.



Oxytocin helps contract the uterus and induce delivery, control bleeding, and promote the release of breast milk.



Its use is especially crucial to prevent new mothers from excessively bleeding after giving birth—a common cause of maternal deaths.



## Why is retail sale of oxytocin banned in India?



From September 1, 2018 the Union Health Ministry imposed a ban on the retail sale and private manufacture of oxytocin, a life-saving drug for new mothers.



The reason for the ban is the misuse of oxytocin in dairy animals, like buffaloes, to increase milk production.



Daily oxytocin injections made cattle barren and reduced their lifespans. In addition, it claimed that drinking milk from oxytocin-treated cattle led to male impotence, early puberty among women and cancers.



## Does milk from such cattle hurt humans?



There is little evidence that oxytocin injected into cows at low doses is secreted in milk.



In a 2014 study by the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, researchers found that oxytocin levels were similar in milk from cows injected with up to 1 IU of the hormone and untreated cows.



Whatever little oxytocin was in the milk did not survive intestinal digestion. So, it is unlikely that humans would experience effects like cancer.



## If oxytocin doesn't hurt, why the ban?



Oxytocin can be overused in the absence of oversight by a veterinary doctor. At high doses, it can hurt animals. Also, when untrained dairy farmers are administering the injection, it can cause pain for the animals.



Sometimes oxytocin is used to compensate for stressful living conditions, which interferes with milk let-down.



Also, because the synthetic oxytocin available in pharmacies is expensive, farmers buy crude pituitary extract of the hormone from grey markets. Such extracts contain several other hormones like gonadotropins, which could have ill-effects too.