

**Health risks posed by use of artificial ripeners in  
vegetables and fruits**

†1021. SHRI BRIJLAL KHABRI:  
SHRI N. BALAGANGA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that vegetables and seasonal fruits are being ripened artificially through oxytocin and other toxic substances in the country;
- (b) whether this is also one of the reasons due to which cancer and cancer like fatal diseases are increasing;
- (c) if so, the details of the steps taken by Government so far to prevent the indiscriminate use of such substances; and
- (d) the details of the action taken against the guilty persons in this regard during the last three years alongwith the number thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY): (a) There have been reports in media about the use of toxic substance like calcium carbide for early ripening of fruits.

(b) This Ministry is not aware of any evidence based claim that due to use of artificial ripeners, cancer and cancer like fatal diseases are increasing.

(c) State/UT requirements have been requested from time to time to keep a strict vigil on use of carbide gas and other hazardous chemicals for ripening of fruits and take action against those found guilty as per law. The State/UT Governments have also been advised to educate the public through mass electronic media against consumption of such artificially ripened fruits/vegetables.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has constituted a Core Committee under Co-Chairmanship of DG, ICMR and DG, ICAR to evolve a strategy to tackle this issue on a long term basis and identify researchable issues pertaining to detection of the agents.

(d) The details of cases, persons booked/convicted are not maintained Centrally.

**Sale of CGHS medicines in open markets**

†1022. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of incidents of sale of medicines meant for CGHS dispensaries in open market that have occurred during the last three years;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.