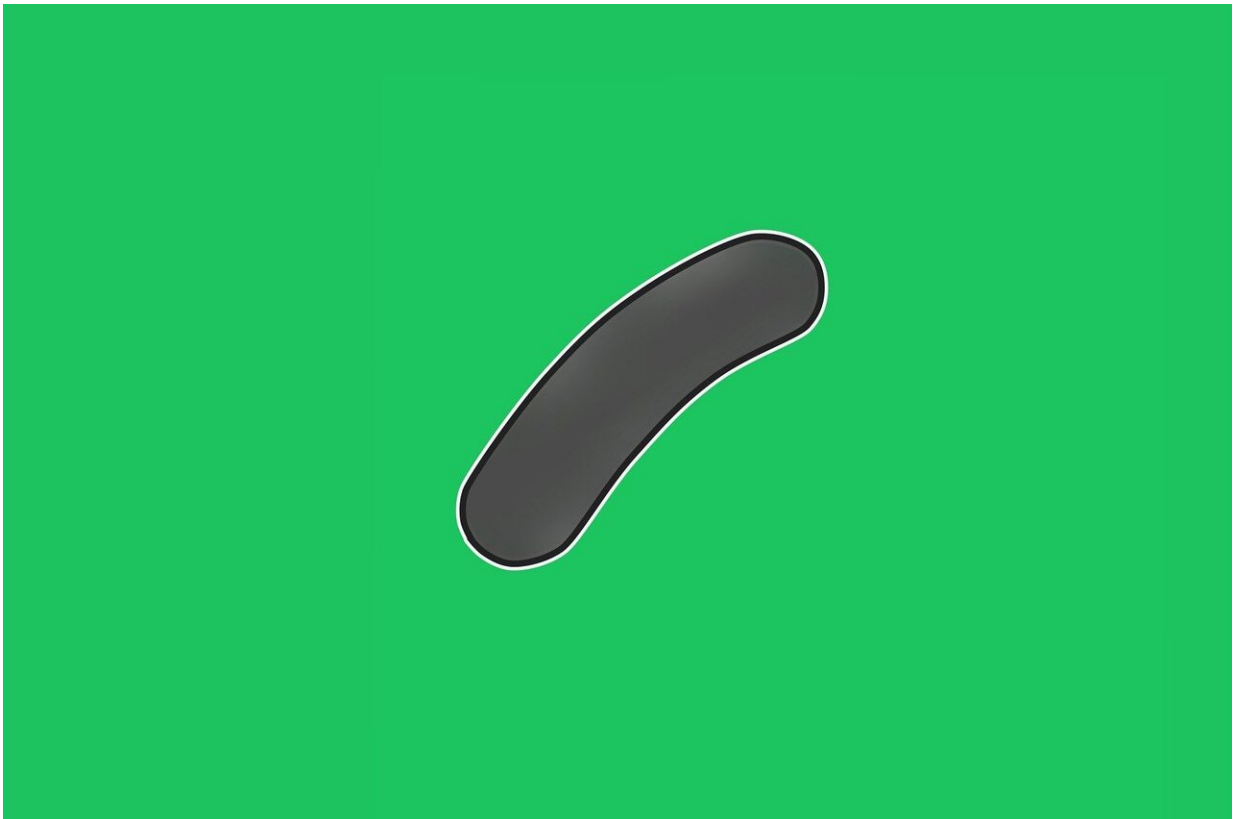


# Johnson and Johnson cuts price of anti-TB tablets

July 6 2020

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US pharmaceutical giant Johnson and Johnson announced Monday an immediate cut in the price of its tuberculosis treatment course—a move NGOs have long been calling for.

Bedaquiline, sold under the brand name Sirturo, was approved for medicinal use in the United States in 2012, becoming the first new tuberculosis drug in 40 years to be given the [green light](#).

Johnson and Johnson said it would make its bedaquiline tablets available to the Stop TB Partnership in around 135 low- and [middle-income countries](#) at \$340 instead of \$400 for a six-month treatment course.

The initiative aims to reach at least 125,000 patients this year and could save national TB programmes up to \$16 million, the UN-hosted partnership said in a statement.

The medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) welcomed the news but said the price should come down further, and be extended to more countries.

"While we anxiously wait for more affordable generic versions of bedaquiline to become available... today's price reduction is a helpful step," said Lara Dovifat, campaigns and advocacy advisor at MSF's Access Campaign.

A bacterial, airborne respiratory disease, TB remains the planet's deadliest infectious killer, according to the World Health Organization.

The WHO said 10 million people fell ill with TB in 2018, and 1.5 million died.

Incidence and deaths have been declining steadily over the last several years, said the Stop TB Partnership.

However, in 2018 there were nearly 500,000 new cases of drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB).

"This new agreement is a welcome development and one that will help us move closer to the United Nations High-Level meeting target of treating 1.5 million people with DR-TB by 2022," said Lucica Ditiu, the Stop TB Partnership's [executive director](#).

"Even though these days we fight against the new COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot let this new virus stop our progress against TB."

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