

Business Standard

ITC launches new hand sanitiser under Savlon brand to take on Covid-19

Product claims to offers quick and persistent action against many enveloped and non-enveloped viruses, in addition to 99.99 per cent bacteria and fungi

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In the wake of the huge global demand for hand sanitisers following the Covid-19 pandemic, cigarettes-to-hotels major ITC Ltd has launched a hand sanitising liquid under the Savlon brand.

Priced at Rs 250 for a 500 ml bottle, ITC claims that the formulation offers quick and persistent action and helps protect against many enveloped and non-enveloped viruses, in addition to 99.99 per cent bacteria and fungi. The product, Savlon Hexa, is aimed at consumers and frontline medical professionals alike and is in the process of being launched across the country.

“Our advanced hand sanitiser is one of our quickest launches, brought to fruition in record time. Savlon Hexa has been designed to address the critical and urgent need for trustworthy, effective preventive hygiene solutions of the nation during these challenging times of Covid-19,” said Sameer Satpathy, chief executive of the personal care products business division at ITC.

According to the company, the rapid spread of Covid-19 has made hand hygiene more critical than ever and the demand for hand sanitisers and handwashes has increased exponentially among consumers and health care professionals.

Industry sources said before the crisis hit India, the sanitiser industry in the country was pegged at Rs 114 crore which was a 50 per cent increase over the previous year.

ITC has already stopped production of cigarettes – its primary revenue earner – and has channelised all its efforts to produce essential items. This has led to the sudden creation of a huge black market for cigarettes across the country.

An ITC spokesperson said the firm has received approvals from several state authorities for manufacturing essential commodities. The company feels it is critical to ensure the availability of essential food and hygiene products for consumers.

“Efforts are being made to ensure that the supply chain functions smoothly across the country despite the challenges of manpower shortage and availability of trucks,” the spokesperson said.

Earlier, ITC had re-purposed its recently commissioned perfume manufacturing plant in Himachal Pradesh to make Savlon hand sanitisers. The unit is producing an additional 125,000 litres of hand sanitisers.

ITC said that it has intensified efforts to ensure enhanced supply and availability of the Savlon range of products in the market to meet the surging demand for sanitisers. It has also reduced the prices of its sanitisers and is currently working round-the-clock to reach the new stocks with the revised price tags to the market.

The company had commissioned this plant in November last year in Manpura, Himachal Pradesh, to produce premium fragrances.

Like its peers in the FMCG category, ITC too has faced challenges like raw material availability, and worker and logistics issues, which have stifled production even for essential items.

Following the outbreak of Covid-19, the Centre has taken various steps to motivate sanitiser makers to run their factories at full capacity and had assured that necessary permissions will be accorded by the states on priority.

The states were also asked to enhance production and availability of hand sanitisers, as there is a severe scarcity in the market.