Rotavirus Vaccine to be ready in seven years
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HYDERABAD: Every year, more than one lakh children fall prey to diarrhea in the country. These deaths are attributed to Rotavirus infection, something all children are infected with the first few years of their life.

And if a collaborative effort between Indian research institutes, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), USA, and Bharat Biotech to develop a vaccine succeed, then the country can hope to put an end of such deaths in about six to seven years from now.

The Rotavirus Vaccine Development Project-India would be located in the city-based Bharat Biotech International Limited, company chairman and managing director Dr. Krishna Ella told reporters on Saturday.

Addressing a press conference along with Dr. Roger I Glass, chief of the viral gastroenteritis section at the CDC, Krishna Ella said though the vaccine was in the final stage of development, it needs to go through the full cycle of tests and approvals before manufacturing it on a commercial scale.

Sounding a note of caution, Glass said the vaccine was expected to be ready in six to seven years from now, but anything certain about its success can be said only when the product was finally cleared for production. He said one out of 250 children born in the country die of Rotavirus induced diarrhea.

The vaccine, as outcome of research undertaken by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the Indian Institute of Science under the Indo-US Vaccine Action Programme, is an outcome of more than a decade of research.

Five Rotavirus surveillance centers will be set up in New Delhi, Vellore, Bangalore, Pune and Kolkata. The clinical trials on children would be followed up with monitoring of their health for a year or two. Once this phase is completed, the vaccine would have to go through the statutory approvals and extensive trials before being made available in the market.

Prof C Durga Rao, head of the microbiology and cell biology department at the Indian Institute of Science was present.