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Haleon to Invest $233.5 Million in India Plant Amid Push Into Emerging Markets

Revenue in India rose by a double-digit percentage last year, driven by its oral-health business

By Aimee Look

Sensodyne toothpaste maker Haleon is pumping around 175 million pounds, or $233.5 million, to build its first manufacturing site in India and deepen its foothold in emerging markets.

Haleon will break ground on a facility to make oral-health products in Madhya Pradesh, central India, on Monday, the company said. The facility will create around 500 new jobs, it added, and follows an investment into a plant in Shanghai.

The Indian plant is the largest the company—which spun out of pharmaceutical group GSK in 2022—has taken on, Haleon Chief Executive Brian McNamara said in an interview.

"We've probably done more rationalizing the supply chain, for example shutting down plants rather than investing in creating a new manufacturing footprint," McNamara said.

But now is the time, he adds. "We're definitely in investment mode."

The U.K. consumer-healthcare company is eyeing acquisitions to expand its portfolio in higher-growth countries such in India, where the wellness space is interesting in particular, McNamara said.

Haleon's growth and plans to expand in emerging markets echo similar moves among its peers. Mucinex cold medicine-maker Reckitt and Unilever, which makes Dove soap, have both been propped up by emerging market sales as consumers in Europe and North America increasingly opt for white-label brands with household budgets under strain.

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COMPANY SUPPLIED IMAGE

Haleon, home to brands like Advil tablets and Centrum vitamins, has in India one of its fastest-growing markets. Revenue there rose by a double-digit percentage last year, driven by its oral-health business.

The project will inform its strategy in other emerging markets like Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, McNamara added.

"It's a broad emerging market strategy with India kind of on the tip of the spear," McNamara said.

The company has relied on its oral-health portfolio to offset weakness in product categories like respiratory and digestive health during a milder cold and flu season, particularly in Europe.

The facility marks the first ground-up construction project for the company. Products made at the site will be exported to 35 other countries across Southeast Asia, Japan, Korea, the Middle East, and Australia, Haleon said.