

Winter causes spurt in respiratory infections in Mumbai



The onset of winter and wide variation between the day and night temperatures have caused a spurt in respiratory infection cases, said doctors in the city.

"People are coming in complaining of cough, cold, and choking sensations. If these are left untreated, there is a chance that they might develop secondary bacterial infections and fever," said Dr Hemant Thacker, consultant physician, Breach Candy Hospital.

Doctors also said secondary bacterial infections may be caused by the ongoing treatment or by changes in the immune system. "There is around a 10-15% increase in the number of patients with chest infections and viral fever. We give antibiotics judiciously and only to patients who have secondary bacterial infections," said Dr Alan Soares, consultant physician, Holy Spirit Hospital, Andheri.

Patients, who have a prior history of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD) and allergies, are complaining of exacerbated symptoms because of the winter smog, said doctors. "Most physicians have increased the dose of inhalers and steroids for asthma and COPD patient. A lot of these patients are senior citizens who step out for morning walks, when the smog is heavy," said Dr Prashant Chhajed, consultant pulmonologist, Fortis Hospital, Mulund.

The temperatures recorded by the India Meteorological Department suggest that the day and night temperatures in the city have fluctuated between 25 to 30 degrees Celsius throughout last week.

Doctors are urging people to avoid self-medication and not take antibiotics irrationally. "Viral infections are self-limiting and subside in a three-four days without any treatment. People should take antibiotics only if the symptoms don't subside in four days with medicines like paracetamol," said Dr Rakesh Kumar Singh, general physician, Dahisar.

Respiratory tract infection among kids exposes them to diabetes risk (http://www.hindustantimes.com/health-and-fitness/respiratory-tract-infection-among-kids-exposes-them-to-diabetes-risk/story-B8E8Y4S1QV1r9hJGZM.html)

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