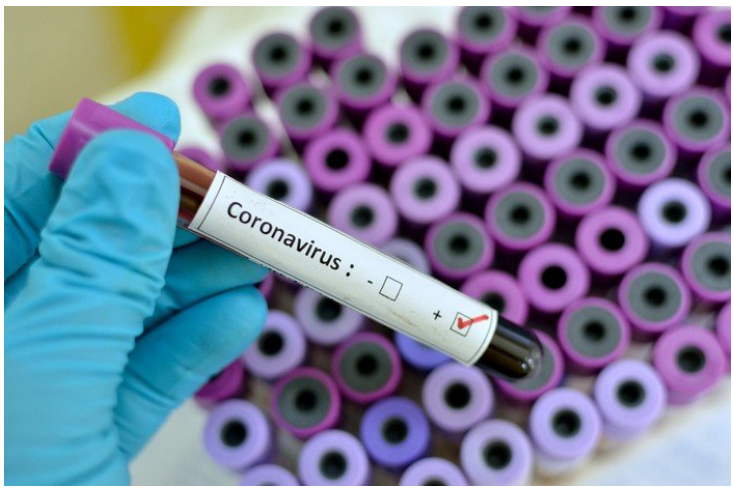
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Coronavirus Combatting COVID-19

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Dr. Navin Dang, Founder & Director - Dr. Dangs Lab & NATHEALTH Industry Leader talks about Coronavirus Combatting COVID-19



2020 has begun with a major news of a cluster of pneumonia cases that have been detected in Wuhan, China. These were found to be caused by a novel Betacoronavirus, the 2019 novel Corona virus (2019-nCoV). As per figures quoted by a publication in the Lancet journal on 24th January 2020, there were 835 laboratory confirmed cases and 25 deaths due to the virus (with new numbers getting added to the statistics with every passing day). This number has increased to 65,000 confirmed cases and 1400 fatalities as reported on 14th February.

Named after the morphological appearance of that of a crown (Corona is Crown in Latin) it is similar to the virus causing SARS (Severe acute respiratory syndrome) epidemic in the early 2000's. We are experiencing a similar epidemic outbreak now in 2020. This virus is known to arise from animals and initially believed to be transmitted to humans via exposure in wet farms and seafood markets.

Incubation period (time from infection to symptoms to appear) is found to be ranging from 3 to 5 days (max upto 14days). Droplet infection has been found to be the main mode of human to human transmission. The spread of the novel Coronavirus outside China is extremely worrisome since China is a global market visited frequently by people across the globe for both tourism & professional reasons, but we shouldn't panic since stringent control measures are being taken to contain the spread of the virus globally. It is reassuring that the government has released a health advisory and is screening airports for any visitors from China. Suspected cases are being kept in isolation. We should spread awareness and undertake preventive measures.

With positive cases having been detected in several provinces of mainland china, Japan, Thailand, USA and other countries, with a few cases in India, the risk of COVID-19 spreading in the country is a fear that most of us have at this stage.

Coronavirus can be transmitted from person to person. It can spread when a person coughs or sneezes or even when someone touches a contaminated surface like a door handle.

Symptoms of nCoV include runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, high fever, difficulty, breathing, pneumonia, bronchitis.

Prevention

- Hand hygiene & Respiratory etiquette are essential at this stage. This means frequent use of hand sanitizers and covering your face with a handkerchief/ tissue/ hand with a flexed elbow to prevent droplets from reaching people around you. Avoid close contact with people who are showing signs of respiratory illness such as sneezing and coughing. Avoid touching your face.
- N95 masks are known to help with prevention of such outbreaks.
- Anyone with likely symptoms (cough, fever, breathlessness, feeling of being unwell, malaise, runny nose, sore throat, weakness, pneumonia & in severe cases- kidney failure) must consult a physician immediately & also are advised to avoid contact with other family members. Anyone who has visited China or has been exposed to someone sick with COVID-19 in the last 14 days should contact their healthcare provider, and tell them about the symptoms and travel history or exposure to a COVID-19 patient.
- Immunosuppressed people are at a higher risk and are advised to be extra careful.
- Ensure that Eggs & meat are thoroughly cooked prior to consumption.
- It is reassuring that the Government of India has released a health advisory and is screening airports for any visitors from China.

Treatment

- Supportive and symptomatic treatment is given to patients.
- Unfortunately, a vaccine for the coronavirus has not been developed yet, as medical researchers continue to study the effects of viral outbreak.

Will it affect people in India?

Although 3 cases have been reported in India at the moment, the government are on authorities are on high alert. The Health ministry in India has begun screening procedures at all international airports especially for passengers coming in from affected areas.

India Preparedness

- Till 10.2.2020, 1108 flights and 1288098 passengers have been screened, with 6000 contacts under tracing. Airports have been strengthened with control rooms and thermal sensors with appropriate training to ground level staff for

dealing with suspected cases.

- Please note - Currently the govt. has only authorized a few govt institutes such as NIV (National Institute of Virology), Pune, NCDC, AIIMS, BJMC (Ahmedabad), KGMU Lucknow, NIV Bengaluru, KHID, Mumbai, SMS MC Jaipur, NICED Kolkata, KIPMR Chennai, NIV FU Allapuzha for testing for COVID-2019. Safdarjung and RML are the nodal referral hospitals in New Delhi for patients suspected of carrying the virus.