

Important is to observe good personal hygiene: Dr Vikas Maurya

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Dr Vikas Maurya, Director (Additional) & Head of Department, Respiratory Medicine & Interventional Pulmonology, Department of Pulmonology & Sleep Disorders, Fortis Hospital shares some advise on coronavirus



A coronavirus is a kind of common respiratory virus that causes an infection in nose, sinuses, or upper throat. Most coronaviruses are not dangerous. Some types of them are serious, though.

As has been seen many people have died when resistant strains of coronavirus have spread across nations, for example in 2003 as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), and in 2012, and 2015 as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

And recently now in early January 2020, the WHO identified a new novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in China. It has spread to many parts of the world and now the first case has also been reported from Delhi apart from Telangana, Jaipur and few earlier cases from Kerala. There is no need to panic and important is to observe good personal hygiene and cough etiquettes. Also equally important is to have healthy life style and eat healthy food to maintain good immunity to fight with viral infection.

Follow certain Dos as explained below:

It is important to know about the virus and its features. The important features are:

Symptoms

The symptoms of coronaviruses are similar to any other upper respiratory infection and it cannot be differentiated from other cold causing viruses like flu virus or rhinovirus. Symptoms appears as early as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure in majority of cases. In few isolated cases symptoms were seen even after 25 or 27 days as well.

Common symptoms

- fever

- Runny or stuffy nose
- Coughing
- sore throat, headache, malaise
- Earache, in case of middle ear infections

Serious symptoms

- Diarrhoea, vomiting
- Shortness of breath when it involves lungs and causes pneumonia.
- Decrease urine output due to kidney involvement

Visit Doctor urgently (alarming symptoms)

- Persistent cough, chest pain
- Increasing shortness of breath
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea
- Decrease urine output

How it is diagnosed

- Lab tests, including nasopharyngeal PCR or viral cultures
- Blood test like antibodies against virus

At risk group (as published after studying > 44,000 patients in China)

- Elderly
- Heart disease
- Chronic diseases like diabetes, chronic lung disease, heart conditions
- Weak immune system like cancer patients, transplant patients or those using immunosuppressants

Complications

- Pneumonia
- Respiratory failure
- ARDS
- Other organ failure like kidney failure
- Death

Do's about coronavirus

There is no vaccine for coronavirus. To help prevent a coronavirus infection and its spread to other people do the following things -

- Observe good personal hygiene
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water or with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- While coughing or sneezing, do cover your mouth
- Keep your hands and fingers away from your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are infected.
- Isolation of the patient is absolute necessary to prevent further spread
- N95/99 mask for patients
- Full body protection gear for care givers
- Ensure fruits and vegetables are properly washed before consumption
- Eat healthy and maintain healthy lifestyle to maintain good immunity

Don't about Coronavirus

- Don't give aspirin to children or teens younger than 19; use ibuprofen or acetaminophen instead
- Avoid joining office or school or college during symptomatic phase
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell or showing signs of illness
- Avoid consumption of raw/undercooked meats for sometime
- Don't travel to farms, live animal markets or where animals are slaughtered

Whom to be Screened

- Patients with symptoms suggestive of respiratory virus infection
- History of visit to China or any other country where it has spread in last 14 days

Treatment

There is no specific treatment or vaccine for the infection and there is no cure. Supportive medical care can relieve the symptoms and reduce the risk of complications.

Important is to:

- Isolation of the patient is important to prevent further spread
- Get good bed rest.
- Drink adequate fluids.
- Take over-the-counter medicine for a sore throat, cough and fever.
- A humidifier or steamy shower can also help ease a sore and scratchy throat.
- In case of pneumonia, patient needs to be hospitalized and treated
- Respiratory failure and acute respiratory distress syndrome requires patient to be put on ventilator. Severe respiratory failure can also leads to death.
- Kidney failure can occurs and needs appropriate treatment or dialysis