



**NOT A HEALTHY SIGN:** A satellite image showing a cloud of smog stretching from the Persian Gulf to South-East Asia, supports a UN environment report that Indians face higher risk of pollution-related diseases this winter.

By Neetu Chandra in New Delhi

**CHILDREN** in the Capital are under the weather with the onset of winter. Failing to cope with sudden fluctuations of temperature, change in humidity levels, a thick blanket of smog and an increased pollution level, the children are falling to an array of illnesses, mainly respiratory infections.

On top of that, soot levels in the Delhi air are reported to have risen alarmingly owing to a dirty brown haze more than a mile thick that is hovering over vast areas of Asia, including the Himalayan foothills, the UN has reported. The organisation traced its fallout to health problems associated with particulate pollution in children.

**Soot levels in the Delhi air has risen alarmingly due to haze**

According to Dr Arvind Bountra, consultant paediatrician with G.M. Modi Hospital, the rise in respiratory problems can either take the shape of common flu, pneumonia or running nose. It is also seen that the onset of winter results in the children suffering from dry, flaking skin and chapped and bleeding lips.

The lack of sunshine, thanks to the all-enveloping brown haze in winter can trigger the Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which may result in mild to acute depression in children.

The haze is hiding the dimming sunlight by up to 25 per cent in the Capital. This is leading to health worries and extreme weather conditions.

Cough, cold and wheezing apart, the young ones in Delhi are down with asthma and, believe it or not, diabetes. Fairly common among children now-a-days, diabetes needs to be

closely monitored at this time of the year. Low temperatures can cause a sudden change in the patient's blood sugar.

Though standard blood sugar tests are known to be crucial for keeping a tab on the sugar levels in a diabetic child, physicians across the world are increasingly recommending the use of modern diagnostic tools, such as the Continuous Glucose Monitoring System (CGMS), during the winter.

Dr Archana Dayal Arya, paediatric endocrinologist and diabetologist at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, said: "Whether the

patient is prone to hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia (excess blood sugar), regular monitoring of blood glucose level is the key to make it sure that your child stays healthy as the temperature plummets."

In case a viral infection lays your child low, doctors advice paracetamol, oral fluids and adequate rest. However, any fever for more than 48 hours or that accompanied by vomiting, rash, headache and rapid breathing should be brought to the attention of a physician, Dr Sanjeev Bagai, director and head of paediatrics, Rockland

Hospital, said. Inhalers, according to him, should be used by children with a history of wheezing and asthma as a preventive measure.

"Viral infections are generally self-limiting, but some infections such as dengue that may also have the same symptoms, require specific care. Every fever is not necessarily an alarm bell, so drugs such as Aspirin, Brufen and Nimesulide should not be administered to children since they can alter the blood clotting and platelet functions," Bagai added.

Additional care is required

while treating because the medicine should be administered after their body weight is calculated.

Moreover, the amount of fluid required should be calculated and not from adults.

One last tip: pack off your children from schools immediately if they are bathing them with warm water. For their tender skin to cope with the sudden temperature, it is a nasty bout of chills.

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**COMMON BACTERIAL AND VIRAL DISEASES IN WINTER**

The common bacterial infections during a changing season are Pneumococcal and Streptococcal



The common viral infections are Influenza, Adeno Virus and Coxsackie

The cardiac and vascular system — abnormal heart beat and variations in the blood pressure due to change in the weather system

**The affected body organs**

**Respiratory System** — cold, cough, allergic sneezing and wheezing, bronchial asthma, allergic bronchitis, sore throats and pneumonia

**Gastro Intestinal system** — vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach cramps and dehydration

**Nervous system** — lethargy and meningitis



**Skin** — allergic rash and dermatitis, especially in children



**Ears and throat** — ear infections and tonsillitis

**Prescription for your children**

- Don't take your children outside home after 7 pm in winter
- Always have warm well-cooked food. Avoid cold outside food
- Wear proper woollens
- Keep your children's ears and throat protected
- Take fever for more than 48 hours seriously
- Avoid self-medication and herbal remedies for children. Visit the nearby doctor right away

**Delhi kids suffer as mercury dips**

Delhi kids suffer as mercury dips. The article discusses the health risks for children in Delhi during winter, including respiratory infections, skin conditions, and the impact of smog and haze. It provides a list of prescriptions for parents to follow, such as keeping children warm, avoiding cold food, and seeking medical attention for persistent fevers or other symptoms. The article also mentions that additional care is required while treating children, and that the amount of fluid required should be calculated based on their body weight.