

# TIMES CITY

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## Seasonal ailments make an appearance

Risha Chitlangia | TNN

**New Delhi:** The fluctuating day and night temperatures in the Capital are taking a toll on the health of Delhiites. Incidents of chicken pox, bacterial meningitis, upper respiratory problems and other seasonal ailments are increasingly being reported. Doctors say the OPD load has shot up by 20 to 25 per cent and warn that change in weather should be taken seriously.

Doctors have reported a sharp rise in the number of chicken pox cases, especially in adults. "This season is conducive for the virus responsible for chicken pox—varicella—to proliferate. Chicken pox in adults is dangerous, whereas in children it is not so serious. As it is a community acquired infection, necessary precautions should be taken, especially by adults who have not been exposed to the chicken pox virus in childhood," said Dr G.C Vaishnava, head of the department, internal medicine, Fortis Healthcare.

Though there is vaccine available for protection from chicken pox, "the efficacy of the vaccine is in question. Unlike the measles vaccine, it is not 100 per cent effective. In fact, paediatricians are divided on the administration of the vaccine, as some believe that chicken pox in childhood helps in building immunity,"

said Dr Bir Singh, professor, community medicine, All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

The present weather is also conducive for bacterial meningitis which, if not treated on time, can prove to be fatal. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi has recorded 43 cases of meningococcal meningitis till Monday in the Capital. "It is a community acquired disease. If high grade fever stays beyond 48 hours along with rashes, it should not be ignored," said Dr Vaishnava.

Gastrointestinal problems are also very common during this season. "It's due to change in eating habit that come along with the change in weather. A lot of children are suffering from diarrhoea, vomiting, abdominal pain and indigestion," said Dr Sanjeev Bagai, director and head of the department paediatric, Rockland Hospital.

"Cases of lower respiratory problems like bronchitis, asthma, pharyngitis (sore throat) etc too have gone up," he added.

In women, urinary tract infections are common during winter. "It happens due to lack of water content in the body. The water intake is far less than the water formation in the body," said Dr Mukesh Mehra, head of the department, Max Healthcare.

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