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 Dr. R.R. Dutta quoted in the article

# Dipping temperature spikes cases of respiratory infections in city

Aditya Dev | TNN

**Gurgaon:** With the onset of winter, the city has started recording a rise in the cases of respiratory and pulmonary disorders.

The chilly weather has not only aggravated the condition of patients suffering from asthma, COPD (Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and interstitial lung disease, but has also made healthy people fall prey to bronchitis, influenza, pneumonia, cough and cold.

On an average, private hospitals in Gurgaon are getting 10-15 new cases of cough and cold everyday at their OPDs. As primary precautionary measures, doctors are advising patients to stay away from dust, smoke, cold and soil. Dr RK Mani, director, department of pulmonology, critical care, at Artemis Health Institute, said, "These days, almost everyone is suffering from cold-related ailments in almost every single house. While the elderly are at a risk of contracting lung infections, children are more prone to asthma."

Doctors say pollution is one of the main causes of asthma, particularly during the months of December and January, increasing the frequency of attacks by 25 percent. Dr Himanshu Garg, consultant, department of respiratory medicine at Medanta Hospital, said, "Asthma is caused by genetic and environmental factors. Dusty atmosphere due to vehicles and construction work going on in the city have played a significant role in increasing the problems. Many NRI patients tell us they feel better after leaving the city."

He added, "Besides that, a large number of patients are complaining of dry cough. Generally such patients have had viral infection or cold earlier. I am getting five to seven such cases in my clinic every day."

Dr R.R. Dutta, senior consultant, medicine, at Paras Hospital, said "Extreme changes in temperature precipitate cough and make breathing difficult. During this time of the year,

**As the weather gets cooler, people with asthma may find that they have more flare-ups because winter brings extra challenges, especially for those with respiratory issues**

Cold air can exacerbate asthma symptoms. When people with asthma have cold, it can also trigger the airways in the lungs to get inflamed and swollen. Experts say preventive measures like using steroid inhalers may help during colder weather

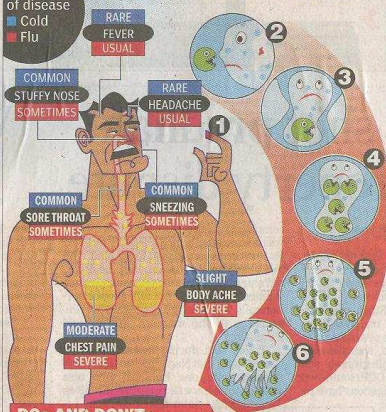
there is a high density of pollen as well as certain viruses in the air, which are responsible for respiratory problems."

Post viral coryza, which is marked by hyperactivity of nerve receptor in airways leading to nasal congestion and loss of smell, and cough variant asthma cases are also being reported. Doctors conduct lung function tests to distinguish between post viral coryza and cough variant asthma. This is important as at least 10 percent of asthmatic patients do not have breathing problems as primary manifestation. Dr Garg informed that the hospital is also receiving suspected cases of H1N1 influenza. Such patients are referred to government-run hospitals in Delhi for further treatment. "Two-three such patients are coming every day," he added.

Dr Mani said extreme weather conditions are bad for the elderly. He warned smokers to cut down on cigarettes as smoking may worsen their COPD symptoms. COPD leads to narrowing of the airways and results in breathing difficulties. In many cases such patients also need hospitalisation.

## FEVER PITCH

Delhi is in the throes of myriad infections once more, thanks to the unseasonal cold and wide variation in day and night temperatures. The infections are characterised by fever, nausea and rashes and doctors say there are two major varieties of disease-causing organisms doing the rounds. Small children are more vulnerable to the bacterial variety and fever can reach 104 degrees. Hospitals have over the past few days recorded an increase of 25-30% in OPD and IPD attendance



### DOs AND DON'Ts

- 1 Do not expose yourself to sudden temperature fluctuations
- 2 Keep children adequately covered
- 3 Avoid self-medication/combination medication
- 4 In case of fever which lasts more than 48 hrs, visit doctor
- 5 Keep the patient adequately hydrated
- 6 Watch out for any rashes, recurrent vomiting, loose motions, headache etc

### WHAT CAUSES SYMPTOMS

- 1 The organism enters the body when you touch your nose or eyes with germ infested hands
- 2 Once inside, the disease causing particles begin to attach themselves to healthy membranes
- 3 Some viruses inject genetic material into the cell, others dissolve in the cell and are absorbed
- 4 Once inside they take over host cell and start replicating themselves
- 5 Less destructive viruses go back to membrane and start affecting other cells
- 6 Other viruses explode the host cell. In both the processes, the target is to affect as many cells as possible

Source: Post Dispatch

Graph: Nirma