



DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY
Tuesday

20220408

Covid infection

Covid infection may increase serious blood clot risk up to 6 months: Study Higher risk of events in patients with underlying conditions and those with more severe Covid (The Tribune: 20220408)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/coronavirus/covid-infection-may-increase-serious-blood-clot-risk-up-to-6-months-study-384382>

Covid infection may increase serious blood clot risk up to 6 months: Study
Photo for representational purpose only.

People infected with Covid-19 are at an increased risk of deep vein thrombosis -- a blood clot in the leg -- up to three months, pulmonary embolism -- a blood clot in the lung -- up to six months, and a bleeding event up to two months, finds a study.

The findings, published by The BMJ, also showed a higher risk of events in patients with underlying conditions, and those with more severe Covid.

Researchers from Umea University in Sweden said these results support measures to prevent thrombotic events (thromboprophylaxis), especially for high risk patients, and strengthen the importance of vaccination against Covid.

It is well known that Covid increases the risk of serious blood clots (known as venous thromboembolism or VTE), but less evidence exists on the length of time this risk is increased, if risk changed during the pandemic waves, and whether Covid also increases the risk of major bleeding.

To address these uncertainties, researchers set out to measure the risk of deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, and bleeding after Covid.

For the study, the team identified more than one million people with confirmed Covid infection between February 1, 2020 and May 25, 2021, and matched them with more than four million people who had not had a positive SARS-CoV-2 test result.

The researchers found a five-fold increase in risk of deep vein thrombosis, a 33-fold increase in risk of pulmonary embolism, and an almost two-fold increase in risk of bleeding in the 30 days after infection.

Risks were the highest in patients with more severe Covid and during the first pandemic wave compared with the second and third waves, which the researchers say could be explained by improvements in treatment and vaccine coverage in older patients after the first wave.

Even among mild, non-hospitalised Covid patients, the researchers found increased risks of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism.

"This is an observational study, so the researchers cannot establish the cause," researchers said.

"Our findings arguably support thromboprophylaxis to avoid thrombotic events, especially for high risk patients, and strengthen the importance of vaccination against Covid," they said.

lifestyle

Making lifestyle changes for an ideal body weight (The Tribune: 20220408)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/making-lifestyle-changes-for-an-ideal-body-weight-384380>

Making lifestyle changes for an ideal body weight

While everyone wishes to have an ideal body weight and a healthy body, it is one of the tasks that require the most practice. To establish a base for ideal body weight, one must successfully maintain a healthy, calorie-controlled diet combined with adequate physical activity which should be followed on a consistent basis.

Additionally, to ensure a strong immunity, a healthy lifestyle, and an ideal weight, one must make permanent changes in the day to day eating and health habits. These things are pivotal because they can determine the choices we will make for our body and these choices can then decide the path for our ideal body weight.

These three yet noteworthy lifestyle changes can leave a lasting impact on our body weight and health in general:

Healthy Eating

While it is no secret that eating healthy is the first step toward a healthy lifestyle, it is even one of the most crucial ones as well. To ensure consistency in weight management, one needs to follow an eating pattern that can promote weight maintenance while allowing for appetite satisfaction.

One way is to make sure that you can lower your calorie intake and keep a check on your food consumption. By using a food journal or food activity app, one can monitor each item that's consumed. Additionally, one must ensure to eat more nutrient based foods— fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Moreover, one must abstain from unhealthy snacking or binge eating by

keeping portion control. By striving for variety in nutritious food items, one can achieve their goals without giving up their favourite foods.

Activeness

The secret behind regular exercise is that it not only allows for calorie restriction, but it can also even help give one a weight-loss and weight management edge. By helping one burn off the excess calories, staying active via regular exercise is the best lifestyle change one can adopt.

It also offers numerous health benefits, including boosting your mood, strengthening your cardiovascular system and reducing your blood pressure. It is proven that to maintain weight loss over the long term, one needs to get regular physical activity.

One can make a small lifestyle change through steady aerobic exercise — such as brisk walking — for at least 30 minutes most days of the week. Additionally, one can even join pilates, take online dance classes or practice HIIT workouts. Similarly, one can be clever in getting more steps in by making several trips up and down stairs instead of using the elevator, or parking at the far end of the lot when shopping.

One must always think about ways to increase physical activity throughout the day even if one can't fit in formal exercise on a given day.

Positivity

To make sure that one remains healthy and maintains the ideal weight, one must incorporate a perspective of positivity and self-care. It's not enough to just eat healthy foods and exercise, to ensure long-term and successful weight management, one has to go above and beyond. By combining a positive outlook with the right habits, one can make these a way of life to implement the required lifestyle changes.

Firstly, one must realise their body requirements and then set a goal for themselves. Instead of being hard, one must gradually change habits and attitudes to make them move in the correct direction.

Also, one must keep a track of their progress and move beyond any setbacks that may come in the way. In face of no immediate results, one must consistently ensure to stick to a healthy lifestyle and habits to witness the results that they want. IANS

Diabetic

Diabetic patients keeping fast need to be extra careful, say health experts(The Tribune: 20220408)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/ludhiana/diabetic-patients-keeping-fast-need-to-be-extra-careful-say-health-experts-384332>

Diabetic patients keeping fast need to be extra careful, say health experts
Photo for representation only.

The fasting period is going on in both Hindu and Muslim communities and many people keep fast during the period. Diabetic patients keeping Navratri or Ramadan fast need to be extra careful about medications, diet and controlling blood sugar levels.

Always talk to your doctor before you fast to understand potential risks or complications and also make yourself aware of managing diabetes and adjusting medicines.

Dr Manik Bajaj, a medicine specialist, said during the month of Ramadan, one's eating pattern changes and it was advisable to take help of a nutritionist.

"It is important to eat healthy, avoid overeating of carbohydrates and fatty foods in meal after sunset. Include slowly absorbed foods and try not to have too many sugary and fatty foods. Always discuss your medicines with your doctor before starting a fast," he said.

Clinical nutritionist Shilpi Grover said for those keeping Ramadan fasts, the 'suhoor' (pre-dawn meal) was essential and should be high on fibre, whole grain and complex carbohydrates. Drink plenty of water after 'Iftar' (breaking fast) and preferably break your fast with two dates and a cup of milk.

Dr Bajaj said for Navratri fast, patients were advised to take small frequent meals at the interval of three hours and choose healthier options such as fruit, buttermilk, curd or nuts. They should stay hydrated and can drink a lot of water, coconut water or buttermilk.

"Buckwheat and Ragi are ideal for people with diabetes for lunch or dinner and instead of puris, they should opt for cheela or roti and also eat a lot of green leafy salad along with it," Shilpi said.

Tips for diabetic patients during fasting

- Closely monitor blood sugar
- Watch for signs of low sugar
- Take frequent meals (Navratri fast)
- Have slow-absorbing foods
- Avoid taking too much coffee or tea
- Adjust medicines as advised by doctor

Be prepared for XE

Covid testing and surveillance need to be stepped up (The Tribune: 20220408)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/editorials/be-prepared-for-xe-384476>

The third wave of Covid-19 is practically over in India and overall normalcy has returned, but these developments should not delude us into assuming that the pandemic is a thing of the past. According to the WHO, a new strain of the Omicron variant, XE, first detected in the UK, appears to be more transmissible than previous strains of the coronavirus. It is a mutant hybrid of two previous Omicron versions — BA.1 and BA.2 — which spread across the world in recent months. Omicron fuelled the third wave in India, though the fatality rate was very low compared to last year's Delta-triggered second wave that claimed lakhs of lives. XE's higher transmissibility suggests that it could become the most dominant strain sooner than later. The global health body has warned that Covid-19 remains a public health emergency of international concern and 'it is too early to reduce the quality of surveillance'.

India, one of the world's worst-hit countries in the first two years of the pandemic, needs to be well prepared for a possible outbreak of XE. The easing/lifting of Covid-induced restrictions is a step in the right direction, but the apparent reduction in testing is likely to impact the country's capacity to promptly detect emerging variants. India's active caseload of around 11,000 is surprisingly minuscule compared to that of the US (nearly 1.5 crore), the UK (19 lakh) and Russia (around 5 lakh). This clearly shows that testing is no longer being done on a large scale. Self-isolation and contact tracing, too, seem to have become erratic. Such laxity could impede India's efforts to deal with the virus in the coming months.

Several countries in Asia and Europe are witnessing a sharp uptick in Covid cases. India seems to be bucking the global trend as of now, but past experience indicates that the situation can quickly spin out of control if adequate surveillance is not maintained. The importance of Covid-appropriate behaviour and booster shots cannot be overestimated. Treading with caution, rather than pressing the panic button, should be the way forward.

Bharat Biotech's 'remedial' steps

India monitors Bharat Biotech's 'remedial' steps (Hindustan Times: 20220408)

<https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=8477accfc9&imageview=0>

India is monitoring the corrective measures being taken by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech to address deficiencies in its facilities that the World Health Organization flagged while suspending procurements of Covaxin, people aware of the matter have said.

There is, however, no plan to suspend the use of Covaxin in India, these people added, saying that they see no concern regarding the safety or efficacy of the vaccine, which is among the two most widely used in the country till now.

“They (Bharat Biotech) have shared their formal response of more than 50 typewritten pages, addressed to World Health Organisation with Drugs Controller General of India also. CDSCO (Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation) is monitoring the rectification process started by them to address the Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) deficiencies,” said a central government official aware of the matter, asking not to be named.

GMP certifications are part of the approval process of a biological product like a vaccine and involves the assessment of whether equipment and protocols in place for their use are to accepted standards in order to avoid risks such as that of contamination. On April 2, the WHO said it was suspending supply of Covaxin through UN agencies due to “the need to conduct process and facility upgrade to address recently identified GMP deficiencies”.

India is “not reviewing Covaxin use (under the national vaccination programme). The safety and efficacy of the product has been established. WHO also attests it,” the official quoted above added.

A day before the WHO announced the suspension, Bharat Biotech issued a statement saying it “agreed with the WHO team on the scope of the planned improvement activities and indicated that they will be executed as soon as practical...”

Details of the exact issue is yet to be made available. Neither the WHO nor Bharat Biotech detailed whether the problems were at specific or all facilities.

“Risk of contamination is one issue when talking about quality control but it doesn’t seem WHO has found that major an issue during its inspection. There are other minor issues like record keeping, room temperature, maintenance etc but when talking about vaccines even these minor issues cannot be ignored,” said Dr NK Mehra, senior immunologist.

Three supplements

**Popping these three supplements can cause acne; know more here
The dermatologist added that acne flare-ups with these supplements are mostly seen in acne-prone skin and not otherwise (The Indian Express:20220408)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/life-style/supplements-causing-acne-biotin-whey-protein-vitamin-b12-7853724/>

acne Dietary supplements can also be the reason behind your acne. (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

Acne is one of the most common skin issues faced by both men and women. It is a condition that occurs when hair follicles plug in with oil and dead skin cells. From stress and hormonal imbalance to erratic diet and lifestyle habits — it can happen due to a lot of reasons.

However, there are also certain items such as foods and supplements that can trigger acne. Dietary supplements, the consumption of which grew exponentially during the pandemic, can also be the reason behind your acne, shared dermatologist Dr Gurveen Waraich.

ALSO READ |Body care: Simple dos and don'ts for clean, moisturised, protected skin
“Popping too many supplements? Don't do that! Supplements can cause acne,” she wrote. Take a look.

Biotin

Biotin is one of the most popular supplements these days, most commonly consumed to stop hair fall and strengthen hair. While it surely helps with hair, its “indefinite and unmonitored consumption can affect your body's absorption of vitamin B5,” she shared. Explaining further, she added, “Since B5 helps to regulate your skin barrier and decrease oil production, less B5 can lead to acne flares.”

Vitamin B12

According to the expert, consumption of vitamin B12 can alter the skin microbiome leading to inflammatory acne in “some people”. It happens especially due to higher doses like injectable vitamin B12, she shared.

ALSO READ |Dermatologist recommends simple tips to take care of damaged hair
Whey protein

Whey protein is one of the most common culprits when it comes to acne flares, the dermatologist said. “Being a byproduct of milk, whey protein contains bovine insulin-like growth factor (IGF1) which increases sebum and androgen production leading to breakouts, especially in women suffering from hormonal acne.”

However, she added that “acne flare-ups with these supplements are mostly seen in acne-prone skin and not otherwise”. “Even among individuals with acne-prone skin, not every skin will react in a similar fashion. However, these are the most common associations seen through various medical studies,” she concluded.

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Menopause

Nutritionist shares simple diet tips to manage symptoms of menopause (The Indian Express:20220408)

Include foods that are rich in fibre and antioxidants (whole grains, fruits and vegetables) to support your heart health, said nutritionist Lovneet Batra

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/nutritionist-diet-menopause-symptoms-7840028/>

menopause Try some of these diet tweaks to deal with menopause (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

Menopause is a natural transition in a woman's life as her menstrual cycles come to an end, and is linked to many uncomfortable symptoms such as hot flashes, mood swings, sleep issues and more, nutritionist Lovneet Batra wrote on Instagram. While the experience is different for every woman, "making changes in your diet may help relieve menopause symptoms," she added.

ALSO READ |Healthy eating: Simple diet tips to lower cholesterol

The expert went on to share certain diet tips that, she said, can help relieve the symptoms.

Here's how

Diet rich in protein

Regularly eating protein can help prevent the loss of lean muscle mass that occurs with age. So, women going through menopause should eat more protein, about 1.2g/kg ideal body weight (60-75grams protein), and for each meal add up 20-25 grams of high-quality protein, she recommended. Foods rich in protein include meat, fish, eggs, legumes, nuts and dairy.

Also Read |Five mudras that will help you manage symptoms of menopause

Consume omega-3 fatty acids

She said that according to research, omega-3s can decrease the frequency of hot flashes and the intensity of night sweats. Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids include fatty fish (mackerel, salmon and anchovies, and seeds like flax seeds, chia seeds, and sabja seeds.

Eat diet rich in calcium, vitamin D, magnesium and vitamin K

Hormonal changes during menopause can cause the bones to weaken, increasing the risk of osteoporosis. So, increase your consumption of dairy products (yoghurt, cheese, and milk), lentils, pseudocereals (amaranth), nuts and seeds.

Also Read | 'Concept of giving us an expiration date really unfair': Salma Hayek opens up on menopause
Add foods containing plant estrogens

Phytoestrogens are naturally occurring plant compounds that can mimic the effects of estrogen in the body. Therefore, they may help balance hormones. Foods rich in phytoestrogens include soybeans and soy products, tofu, tempeh, flaxseeds, chickpeas, peanuts

Include foods that are rich in fibre and antioxidants (whole grains, fruits and vegetables) to support your heart health, she said.

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Ayurvedic expert - skin and hair care guide

Ayurvedic expert shares a comprehensive summer skin and hair care guide "In the summer, the body's mechanisms are affected in many ways as the influence of both sun and wind becomes relatively strong," said Ayurvedic expert Varalakshmi Yanamandra. (The Indian Express:20220408)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/life-style/ayurvedic-expert-shares-a-comprehensive-summer-skincare-guide-for-all-skin-types-7840630/>

ayurveda, skincare, haircare Everything you need to know about what Ayurveda has to say about summer skin and haircare. (Photo: Pexels)

In most parts of India, the summer season is extreme, with heat, humidity, dryness, and pollution soaring. Besides amping up your health routine and keeping yourself safe during extreme weather conditions, you also need to give your skin a lot more TLC. The combined effect of the harsh sun, pollution, and dryness can wreak havoc and result in irritated skin and a compromised barrier. The same applies to your hair, which might feel frizzier, drier, and lackluster during summers.

“In the summer, the body’s mechanisms are affected in many ways as the influence of both sun and wind becomes relatively strong,” stated Ayurvedic expert Varalakshmi Yanamandra. “The fire element of the body i.e., pitta dosha gets influenced by the summer heat. Hair being the by-product of the bone tissue is linked to gut health. During summer, the digestive fire gets deranged and the nourishment of body tissues deteriorates, thus causing impairment in hair growth and impacting both appearance and strength.” She said that it is, therefore, important to keep pitta in balance as there is more heat and intensity in the body. “When it is kept in balance it will maintain physiological functions and keep both skin and hair healthy.”

ALSO READ |Nine Ayurvedic guidelines for a healthy and happy gut

When we talk about skincare and summer, it goes beyond just applying sunscreen and wearing sunglasses; the diet and the seasonal hair and skincare regimen we follow is also equally, if not more important. Yanamandra shared the following Ayurvedic rituals that will help your skin cope with summer:

Abhyanga – Ayurvedic oil massage is ideal to support your body from within. Applying cooling oils to the body and gently massaging it focusing more on the head, ear and feet daily before bath can create a protective shield. Any coconut-based skin oil is good to be used in summer as it has cooling properties.

Hair brushing – Brush your hair daily. Brushing the scalp stimulates blood flow and promotes hair growth.

Nasya – Instillation of medicated oils or ghee in the nose is another healthy practice.

Hydration – Ayurveda recommends drinking sufficient water. It is important to stay hydrated all day long. Boiled and cooled water may be infused with cooling herbs that can help beat the heat and keep the body hydrated.

Meditation – Stress plays a significant role in hair health. It is important to keep the mind calm and stress-free by meditating.

Breathing – Sheetali Pranayama, known as cooling breathing, helps with cooling down the body temperature. It keeps the mind calm and is also beneficial for maintaining a digestive fire.

coconut oil Coconut oil is considered a hero ingredient for both skin and haircare due to its cooling properties. (Photo: Getty/ Indian Express)

ALSO READ |These ayurvedic herbs will make your hair healthy, shiny and voluminous
As for keeping your hair healthy, Yanamandra suggested protection of the scalp from the sun while going out. She also shared that Ayurveda recommends deep massaging with coconut-based hair oil as it helps in improving blood circulation, reducing inflammation, nourishing the hair follicles, and stimulating hair growth. It helps protect the hair from external aggressors such as pollution. Application of cooling herbal pastes like sandalwood also keeps the scalp cool. Additionally, make sure to carry an umbrella while stepping out of the home to protect the head and body from sharp sun rays.

Besides oil massage, Yanamandra shared the following rituals for hair:

Consume a nourishing diet by eating fresh and seasonal fruits and vegetables
Stay well-hydrated with coconut water or water from the clay pot

Practice sheetalī and nādi shodhana pranayama

Adding good herbs in food like aloe vera, sandalwood, neem, holy basil brings a cooling effect. Food, too, plays a big role in providing the hair and skin protection and nourishment against external aggressors, harsh sun, dryness, and humidity. Come summer, Yanamandra suggested adjusting the diet to include more pitta and vata-pacifying foods.

Food, too, plays a big role in providing the hair and skin protection and nourishment against external aggressors, harsh sun, dryness, and humidity. (Photo: Pixabay)
For the skin:

Avoid foods that are spicy, salty and sour. Example, pickle, tamarind, raw mango, sour fruits, etc.

As the digestive fire decreases during summer, it is ideal to eat easily digestible food

Intake of sweet-tasting food keeps pitta and vata in balance

Include healthy fats to counter the drying quality of summer, and avoid fried, junk and heavy foods

Drinks prepared from fresh fruits added with lemon, sugar, salt help in beating dehydration

Well churned buttermilk is recommended during summer. Coconut water is also beneficial as it is sweet and nourishing

ALSO READ | Three pulses you must add to your summer diet

For hair:

World Health Day 2022 -- ultra-processed foods

World Health Day 2022: How ultra-processed foods affect health and environment; sustainable ways to remain healthy (The Indian Express:20220408)

Keeping in mind the current pandemic, a polluted planet and an increasing incidence of disease, the theme of World Health Day 2022 is 'Our Planet, Our Health'

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/world-health-day-2022-ultra-processed-foods-health-environment-sustainable-health-tips-7857434/>

burger, fries Apart from affecting our health, ultra-processed foods leave a severe adverse impact on the planet too. (Source: Pixabay)

World Health Day is a global awareness day observed every year on April 7 to shift focus towards the health issues affecting people across the world. Keeping in mind the current pandemic, a polluted planet, and an increasing incidence of diseases, the theme of World Health Day 2022 is 'Our Planet, Our Health'.

The World Health Organisation noted that more than 13 million deaths around the world each year are due to avoidable environmental causes including the climate crisis, which is the single biggest health threat concerning people across the globe. As such, WHO will focus "global

attention on urgent actions needed to keep humans and the planet health and foster a movement to create societies focused on well-being,” it said.

As we highlight the collective importance of keeping the planet and ourselves happy today, let’s also understand how the rising consumption of ultra-processed foods is not just detrimental to health but also to the environment.

ALSO READ |World Health Day 2022: Simple ways to beat the summer heat and its ill effects
Impact of ultra-processed foods on health and the environment

According to Dr Anish Desai, nutraceutical physician and founder, IntelliMed Healthcare Solutions, ultra-processed foods account for around 25-60 per cent of daily energy intake in many countries. “Processed foods such as baked packaged goods, snacks, carbonated drinks, cereals with sugar, ready to eat foods containing additives, dry vegetable soups, reconstituted meats, and fish foods generally constitute high amounts of processed sugar, salt, fat but lack nutrients such as vitamins, micronutrients, and fibre,” he said.

He added that consuming such foods can lead to obesity, coronary heart disease, diabetes, irritable bowel syndrome, depression, and cancer.

Apart from affecting our health, they leave a severe adverse impact on the planet, too. In a research paper published by the British Medical Association, it was suggested that consumption of processed food over three decades lead to a 21 per cent increase in diet-related greenhouse gas emissions.

For every nutrient present in soy, there are two antinutrients present that are harmful to our health, the nutritionist said. (Source: Pixabay)

Elucidating further, Dr Desai said, “Rapid rise of ultra-processed foods in human diets will impact the diversity of plant species available for human consumption, as the production of ultra-processed foods involves greater use of ingredients extracted from a handful of high-yielding plant species (such as maize, wheat, soy and oilseed crops) which means that animal-sourced ingredients used in many ultra-processed foods are often derived from confined animals fed on the same crops.”

“Another area of concern is that ultra-processed food production uses large quantities of natural resources like land, water, energy, herbicides and fertilizers, causing environmental degradation from greenhouse gas emissions and accumulation,” he added.

Agreed functional nutritionist Mugdha Pradhan, CEO and Founder, iThrive. “Processed foods harm the environment as they leave behind a relatively high carbon footprint. In the process of production of these foods, energy sources are overexploited. Also, they use unnatural and artificial methods to produce them,” she explained.

Further, she shifted focus to animal cruelty involved in the production of ultra-processed foods. “Processed milk and meat are produced by giving estrogen injection and antibiotics to animals.”

Sustainable methods for better health and planet

Here are some sustainable health tips you must adopt in your lifestyle, as suggested by Pradhan.

ALSO READ |One of the best pre-workout fruits for diabetics is...

*Eat organ meat as they are high in nutrition and eggs. But, ensure to eat free-range meat.

*Stop using seed and vegetable oils. Instead use ghee, butter, or coconut oil.

*Stop eating soy. For every nutrient present in soy, there are two antinutrients present that are harmful to our health.

*Ensure to include movement in your daily routine. A sedentary lifestyle can give rise to many health issues.

The biggest impact of implementing sustainable habits in health care, according to Dr Desai, is in focusing on the environmental and social elements of health at the source: by establishing healthy living and workspaces. "Incorporating sustainability into your lifestyle means becoming aware of the impact of your choices in food, products, and energy use," he said.

Covid-19: World Health Organization's XE variant

Covid-19: World Health Organization's Dr Maria Van Kerkhove on what the XE variant is, and its transmissibility (The Indian Express:20220408)

"The virus is still with us. It is circulating at a really intense level and we need to use all the tools available to us," said American infectious disease epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/world-health-organization-maria-van-kerkhove-covid-19-xe-variant-concern-virus-7857649/>

variant Notably, Omicron variant has many sub-lineages BA. 1, BA. 2 (Source: Express Photo by Gajendra Yadav)

Quashing reports that Covid-19's new variant XE is 10 times more transmissible, the World Health Organization clarified that the recombinant, or a sub-variant of Omicron's sub-lineages BA.1 and BA.2, has "10 per cent transmissibility".

Also Read |Omicron may cut future severity of Coronavirus, study shows

"Based on the initial analysis of available sequences, there is a slight growth advantage of this recombinant over BA.2, about a 10 per cent increase in transmissibility. Not 10 times as has been reported by some. But we are analysing this with all available information and we continue to do so. There are thousands of professionals working around the world to understand what these changes mean," said Maria Van Kerkhove, American infectious disease epidemiologist.

Notably, the Omicron variant has many sub-lineages BA. 1, BA. 2. Now, there is a recombinant of both these called XE. "XE is being classified under Omicron," she said in a video message on Twitter.

Also Read |Why a gap of 9-12 months between ‘precaution dose’ and second jab is important
Stressing the need to take preventive steps and keep one’s guard up, she said “vaccinations remain critically important and incredibly effective at preventing severe disease and death”.

“The virus is still with us. It is circulating at a really intense level and we need to use all the tools available to us. These tools are vaccines, and more importantly, vaccination. We need to make sure that when it is your turn, you get vaccinated and you receive the full course of the doses. And we need to critically ensure that those around the world, particularly, those that are most vulnerable, people who are of older age, who have an underlying condition, and our frontline workers, get vaccinated in every single country,” she stated.

Maharashtra, Maharashtra latest news, Maharashtra covid cases, covid deaths, comorbidities, coronavirus pandemic, covid latest news, omicron, case fatality ratio, Dr Jayanthi Shastri, indian express Special vaccination drive for students at a school in Navi Mumbai. (Express Photo by Narendra Vaskar)

According to her, one must also follow other measures like physical distancing, wearing a mask, avoiding crowded spaces, opening the windows and doors when inside, and staying home if unwell. “All of these tools continue to work against reducing the spread as well as prevent severe disease and death. But vaccinations remain critically important and incredibly effective at preventing severe disease and death. So, get vaccinated when it is your turn,” she added.

Health Care Services

One of India’s tallest hospital towers to be built in Jaipur (The Hindu :20220408)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/one-of-indias-tallest-hospital-towers-to-be-built-in-jaipur/article65296751.ece>

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who laid the IPD tower’s foundation stone at Jaipur’s Sawai Man Singh Hospital on Tuesday, affirmed that it would help strengthen health service infrastructure in Rajasthan. File

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who laid the IPD tower’s foundation stone at Jaipur’s Sawai Man Singh Hospital on Tuesday, affirmed that it would help strengthen health service infrastructure in Rajasthan. File | Photo Credit: Rohit Jain Paras

CM lays foundation stone for Sawai Man Singh Hospital’s 24-storey In-Patient Dept. tower
The 24-storey In-Patient Department (IPD) tower, launched with its foundation stone laid at the State-owned Sawai Man Singh Hospital (SMSH) campus in Jaipur, will be one of the tallest hospitals in the country on the completion of its construction. The tower will have a helipad for air ambulances, a “medical martyr memorial centre”, and 1,200 additional beds for patients.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who laid the tower’s foundation stone on Tuesday, affirmed that it would help strengthen health service infrastructure in Rajasthan. He said the model of ‘Nirogi

Rajasthan' was conceptualised and implemented in 2019 and the State government would shortly bring in the Right to Health Act to provide healthcare for all.

ALSO READ

Leadership question remains alive in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh Congress units

The IPD tower, along with an Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, will be constructed at a cost of ₹588 crore in the next 32 months. One hundred well-equipped 'Chiranjeevi Mamta Express' ambulances were flagged off on the occasion for providing medical services to expectant mothers during delivery, and for postpartum treatment of women in the far-flung rural areas of the State.

A 'Nirogi Rajasthan Medifest-2022' was also inaugurated for holding 18 interactive sessions with medical experts. Mr. Gehlot said health education would be incorporated in primary school pedagogy. The construction of four satellite hospitals in Jaipur with an investment of ₹100 crore was also announced on the occasion.

Medical and Health Minister Parsadi Lal Meena said the first tower of its kind in the country would provide state-of-the-art facilities to the patients with its intensive care units and 20 out-patient wings. The SMSH, which is already the biggest government hospital in Rajasthan, receives about 15,000 out-patients per day. Mr. Meena said patients would get all the facilities in one building after the IPD tower's construction.

NITI Aayog member V.K. Paul, Medanta Heart Institute's Naresh Trehan, Narayana Health's Devi Prasad Shetty, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)-New Delhi's Randeep Guleria, and Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences' S.K. Sarin were present in the foundation stone laying ceremony.

Omicron's XE recombinant variant

Centre denies presence of Omicron's XE recombinant variant (The Hindu :20220408)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/mumbai-confirms-omicrons-xe-recombinant-variant-union-health-ministry-denies-it/article65296308.ece>

A health worker takes a swab sample from a woman for COVID-19 test at NMMC Hospital in Navi Mumbai on March 24, 2022.

A health worker takes a swab sample from a woman for COVID-19 test at NMMC Hospital in Navi Mumbai on March 24, 2022. | Photo Credit: PTI

INSACOG has decided to take up another round of genomic sequencing at a national lab for confirmation

The Union Health Ministry on Wednesday refuted claims that India has reported its first case of the COVID-19 variant, XE, in Mumbai. The rebuttal came shortly after the Brihanmumbai

Municipal Corporation (BMC) said that the results of the 11th batch of next generation genome sequencing conducted by it on 230 COVID-19 positive patients had found one case of Omicron's new sub-variant, XE.

The BMC noted that a 50-year-old female patient, a costume designer by profession and a member of a film shooting crew, who had arrived from South Africa on February 10, 2022, had tested positive for XE. The civic body added that she is double vaccinated, and she tested negative for COVID-19 on arrival in India, but on March 2, 2022, in routine testing conducted by Suburban Diagnostics, she was found to be positive and quarantined. The result of the test done on the following day was negative.

ALSO READ

The recombinant variants of SARS-CoV-2

According to the BMC, out of 230 COVID-19 patients tested, 228 were infected with the Omicron variant while one was infected by the Kappa variant. Of these, 21 had to be admitted to hospital. None of them was in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) or needed oxygen support.

A senior health official, however, maintained, "FactQ files in respect of the sample, which is being said to be the XE variant, were analysed in detail by genomic experts of the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG), who have inferred that the genomic constitution of this variant does not correlate with the genomic picture of the XE variant."

The BMC in its release said: "The patient's lab sample has been referred to Kasturba Hospital Central laboratory for whole genome sequencing. It has been found to be a new XE variant in initial sequencing. Though GISAID also confirmed it, INSACOG has decided to go for another round of genomic sequencing at national laboratory for sure confirmation of XE variant."

ALSO READ

Recombination of two virus variants seen since 2020

"This lady is totally asymptomatic and found to be RT-PCR negative on repeat testing. XE, a new variant of COVID, is a combination of the BA.1 and BA.2 strains of Omicron and found to be responsible for enhanced viral transmission according to primary reports. Frequent changes in genomic structure are part of the natural life course of the viruses and there is no need to be scared but everyone should opt for appropriate precaution," the BMC said.

XE is a recombinant that's a mutation of the BA.1 and BA.2 Omicron strains. Recombinant mutations emerge when a patient is infected by multiple variants of a virus, according to experts.

INSACOG is the forum that was set up under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare by the Government of India on December 30, 2020 to monitor genome sequencing and virus variations of circulating strains of COVID-19 in India. The consortium ascertains the status of Variants of Interest (VoI) and Variants of Concern (VoC) in the country; establishes sentinel surveillance and surge surveillance mechanisms for early detection of genomic variants; and assists in formulating an effective public health response. It also determines the presence of genomic variants in samples collected during super-spreader events and in areas reporting increasing trend of cases/deaths etc.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned of the new subvariant XE, stating that it's more transmissible than any strain of COVID-19. There are three hybrid or recombinant viruses in total that have been detected so far. These are XD, XE and XF, of which XD and XF are a combination of the Delta and Omicron variants. The XE variant is a hybrid of two versions of Omicron — BA.1 and BA.2.

The new mutant XE emerged for the first time in mid-January this year. Britain's health agency said on April 3 that XE was first detected on January 19, and 637 cases of the new variant have been reported in that country so far.

Recombinant variants of SARS-CoV-2

The recombinant variants of SARS-CoV-2 (The Hindu :20220408)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/the-recombinant-variants-of-sars-cov-2/article65292323.ece>

How are mutations and recombinants different from each other? Is the newly detected recombinant coronavirus more transmissible?

The story so far: The World Health Organization (WHO) has flagged the emergence of a new variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus — the XE recombinant. The WHO further added that the recombinant virus was detected in the U.K. on January 19 and over 600 sequences have been reported and confirmed since.

XE Wave (Dainik Bhasker:20220408)

<https://epaper.bhaskar.com/detail/1246041/10308298016/mpcg/08042022/194/image/>

भारत में तीसरी लहर ओमिक्रॉन से आई थी, XE इसी का नया वर्जन; इसलिए हमें खतरा नहीं

- डॉ. समीरन पांडा, वैज्ञानिक, आईसीएमआर
- डॉ. रमण गंगाखेडकर, पूर्व वैज्ञानिक आईसीएमआर
- प्रो. संजय राय, कम्युनिटी मेडिसिन, एम्स दिल्ली

मुंबई में कोरोना का नया वर्जन मिलने को लेकर अलग-अलग दावे किए जा रहे हैं। राज्य सरकार कह रही है कि नया वर्जन मिला है, जो पहले के मुकाबले 10 गुना ज्यादा संक्रामक है। केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय कह रहा है कि अभी नए वर्जन के मुंबई में मिलने की पुष्टि नहीं हुई है। इन दावों के बीच लोगों के मन में फिर नई चिंता घर करने लगी है। इससे जुड़े सवाल को लेकर भास्कर ने देश के तीन प्रमुख वैज्ञानिकों से बात कर पूरा मामला समझा...

■ **कोरोना का नया वर्जन XE क्या है?**
यह ओमिक्रॉन का ही रूप है, जो ओमिक्रॉन बीए.1 और बीए.2 का मिश्रण है। दरअसल, वायरस लगातार म्यूटेट होता रहता है।

■ **यह कितना खतरनाक है?**
दो साल के कोरोनाकाल में डेवलप हुई वैज्ञानिक समझ यही बताती है कि इस नए सब वैरिएंट से भारत में खतरा लगभग शून्य है।

■ **भारत में खतरा क्यों नहीं, जबकि चीन समेत कुछ देशों में इसी वजह से संक्रमण तेजी से फैल रहा है?**
भारत में तीसरी लहर का कारण ओमिक्रॉन था। XE भी ओमिक्रॉन का ही नया वर्जन है। संक्रमण की नई लहर हमेशा नए वैरिएंट की वजह से आती है। सीरो सर्वे बताते हैं कि भारत की 90% आबादी को संक्रमण हो चुका है। ऐसे में दोबारा संक्रमण की आशंका बेहद कम है। दूसरी ओर, चीन में पहले बहुत कम

लेकिन... एहतियात जरूरी है। कोरोना अभी हमारे बीच बना हुआ है, इसलिए मास्क और भीड़भाड़ से बचने का नियम नहीं छोड़ना है।

की वजह से दुनियाभर में अभी तक मौतों के मामले नोटिस में नहीं आए हैं।

■ **कहा जा रहा है कि XE वर्जन ओमिक्रॉन के मूल वर्जन से 10 गुना ज्यादा संक्रामक है?**

50 गुना ज्यादा संक्रामक हो तो भी क्या फर्क पड़ता है। क्योंकि, अब भारत में लोगों के शरीर के अंदर उस संक्रामकता से लड़ने की क्षमता पैदा हो चुकी है। लोगों को पता भी नहीं चलेगा और शरीर के अंदर की एंटीबॉडी अपना काम करके वायरस को खत्म कर देगी।

■ **जब यह वर्जन इतना घातक नहीं है तो इसे लेकर दुनियाभर में डर का माहौल क्यों है?**

भारत ही नहीं, विदेशों में भी इस पर अवैज्ञानिक तरीके से बातें हो रही हैं। इसलिए लोगों में डर पैदा हो गया है। हमें भी कई ऐसे मैसेज मिल चुके हैं, जिससे आम आदमी दहशत में आ सकता है। इसलिए, हम लोगों से कहना चाहते हैं कि सोशल मीडिया पर चलने वाले ऐसे मैसेज को गंभीरता से नहीं लें।

■ **कई ऐसे देश हैं, जहां बड़ी आबादी को बूस्टर डोज भी लग चुकी हैं, वहां भी यह वैरिएंट लोगों को शिकार बना रहा है, ऐसा क्यों है?**

यह बात समझनी होगी कि शरीर में एंटीबॉडी कैसे बनती है। कौन सी एंटीबॉडी लंबे समय तक रहती है। भारत में वैक्सिन तो लगी है, लेकिन इससे भी बड़ी बात यह है कि करीब-करीब पूरी आबादी को संक्रमण हो चुका है।