

# Virus mix leaves city battling fever & fatigue

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**Calcutta:** A cocktail of viruses, including influenza and Covid, is making many Calcuttans fall ill.

Fever, respiratory distress, extreme weakness, loss of appetite and diarrhoea are among the common symptoms reported by hundreds of people who have fallen sick over the past few weeks.

Doctors said that many patients with viral infections were being admitted to hospitals.

H1N1, commonly known as swine flu, has been detected among several patients with viral infections. Other strains of influenza, Covid and com-

mon seasonal viruses are also making Calcuttans ill this monsoon, doctors said.

A businessman in his early 50s from Chetla was forced to stay in bed after developing a fever, bodyache and loss of appetite.

"I suffered for more than a week. Initially, I had fever and severe weakness. I was so weak that I could barely get out of bed. I also lost my appetite," he said.

A doctor and his wife, residents of Gariahat, also suffered from fever last week.

"We had a fever and symptoms resembling allergic reactions, such as sneezing and a runny nose. The fever lasted for a couple of days, but the

other symptoms continued for more than a week," the doctor said.

Doctors said the prevailing weather was conducive to the spread of viruses.

"The high moisture in the air and the temperature are conducive to viruses, particularly influenza viruses, becoming active," said Chandramouli Bhattacharya, an infectious diseases expert at Peerless Hospital.

On Monday, Bhattacharya had 17 patients admitted under his care, more than a third of whom were suffering from viral infections.

"Most of the patients are suffering from fever and respiratory symptoms. The virus

is mainly affecting the upper respiratory tract," Bhattacharya said.

"Along with influenza, some patients are also testing positive for Covid. This is the SARS-CoV-2 virus that caused the pandemic. However, the symptoms are very mild," he added.

According to Bhattacharya, Covid vaccination should be made available again in India.

"In Europe and the US, the Covid vaccine is included among the recommended vaccines. Although Covid symptoms have become milder, there can be severe manifestations in rare cases, besides the loss of working days. So, the

vaccine should be made available here," he said.

Doctors said the H1N1 virus had also been detected in some patients admitted with viral infections.

"Over the past few weeks, H1N1 has been found in some patients admitted with fever and respiratory distress. Some of them had to be shifted to the ICU," said Amitabha Saha, director of critical care medicine at Desun Hospital.

"In most cases, the patients have comorbidities such as heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease," he added.

Suman Saha, a consultant microbiologist at Narayana Health RN Tagore Hospital,

said about 20% of samples from patients with viral infections tested positive for H1N1.

"This time, it is more common among adults. It is a type of Influenza A virus and usually requires specific antiviral drugs for treatment," he said.

"We are also getting some samples that are testing positive for the Covid virus."

Children, too, are being affected by H1N1, doctors said.

"At least 30% of the children being admitted are testing positive for H1N1. Many of them appear to be contracting the infection at school," said Apurba Ghosh, executive director of the Institute of Child Health, Calcutta.

**SICK SEASON**

**Viruses at play**

- H1N1
- Covid
- Other influenza viruses

**Common symptoms**

- High fever
- Runny nose
- Nausea
- Diarrhoea
- Weakness
- Bodyache
- Loss of appetite