



Monsoon season is a time of joy and celebration for many in India. However, if down with one of the monsoon ailments, it could be harrowing.

Monsoon ailments are those that are seen with increasing incidence during monsoon.

They can be broadly classified into

- Mosquito-borne diseases: Mosquitoes are a major health hazard during monsoon. They can spread diseases such as malaria, dengue, and chikungunya.
- Waterborne diseases: Waterborne diseases are also be a major problem during the monsoon season. These diseases are caused by bacteria or viruses that are found in contaminated water such as Typhoid, Cholera, Hepatitis and gastroenteritis.
- Respiratory infections: In monsoon season respiratory infections are not left behind. These infections are caused by viruses or bacteria that spread through the air. Influenza or flu is a common type of monsoon illness that often accompanies cold and cough during the rainy season. So called Viral fevers also occur with increasing frequency and spread like wildfire within families.
- Leptospirosis is a monsoon ailment that is contracted by wading/ swimming in stagnant water.

Malaria, dengue, typhoid, leptospirosis and chikungunya are all serious diseases that can lead to hospitalization and may be fatal in some cases.

*The following are some of the signs and symptoms that may warrant hospitalization:*

- High fever: A high fever that is unresponsive to medication is a sign of a serious infection.
- Severe headache: A severe headache that is accompanied by other symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and altered sensorium (confusion), is a sign of a serious infection.
- Rash: A rash that is accompanied by other symptoms, such as fever, headache, and joint pain, is a sign of a serious infection.

- Severe muscle pain: Severe muscle pain that is accompanied by other symptoms, such as fever, headache, and rash, maybe a sign of a serious infection.
- Dehydration: Dehydration is a serious condition that can occur if one is not consuming enough fluids. Symptoms of dehydration include dry mouth, decreased urination and fatigue. Dehydration is more sinister in diabetics.
- Non-traumatic bleeding from any part or body or under the skin (Ecchymoses)
- Shock: Shock is a life-threatening condition that occurs when your body's organs do not receive enough blood. Symptoms of shock include low blood pressure, rapid heart rate, and confusion.

If you are any one close to you is experiencing any of the above, it is important to see a doctor immediately.

In some cases, hospitalization may be necessary to receive treatment and supportive care; more so if the treatment is delayed.

*More at risk for getting severe infections / need for hospitalization:*

- Age: Children and elderly are more likely to need hospitalization for these diseases.
- Underlying health conditions: People with underlying health conditions, such as heart disease or diabetes, those on long term oral steroids or on cancer chemotherapy are more likely to need hospitalization for these diseases.
- Patients with compromised organs like Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), Chronic Liver Disease (CLD), Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) are at risk of severe disease as well as acute dysfunction of compromised organ. Example – CKD patient with severe malaria/ dengue will get AKD (Acute Kidney Disease) on CKD.
- Severity of the infection/ complicated infections: The severity of the infection will also play a role in determining whether or not a person need to be hospitalized. Dengue fever is largely well managed in domiciliary setting but thrombocytopenia (low platelets), dengue haemorrhagic fever or dengue shock syndrome mostly require ICU management.

*Few tips for self-care:*

- If having fever, maintain a chart of armpit readings every 2-3 hours and share with your doctor
- Do not self-medicate.
- Do not procrastinate. Consult a Doctor with any fever not remitting in 24 hours. Many a patients have turned critical within 24-48 hours
- Hydration is extremely important for managing monsoon ailments because it helps to flush out toxins and bacteria from the body; helps regulate body

temperature; prevent dehydration, which can worsen the symptoms of almost all monsoon ailments.

- Hydration is essential for preventing and managing Diarrhea, dysentery as it helps to replace the fluids and electrolytes that are lost through Diarrhea.
- Dehydration & electrolyte imbalance: one of the common causes of hospitalization in high fevers and gastrointestinal infections. Thus, it is important to drink plenty of fluids and replenish electrolytes to replace the losses.
- A healthy adult need to consume 2800 ml of fluids a day (2000 ml water and 800 ml in hidden water – fruits, salads, butter milk, milk gravies etc). For every degree of fever the intake should increase by 200-250 ml a day.
- Most people with fever do not feel hungry; consume large amounts of soup, take *khichdi*, porridge, oats etc
- Sugary drinks, coffee and alcohol to be avoided, as these can dehydrate further.
- Consume fruits and vegetables that are high in water content, such as watermelon, cucumber and tomato.
- If sweating a lot, replenish electrolytes by taking oral rehydration salts.
- Avoid swimming in stagnant water, as this can increase risk of waterborne diseases mainly leptospirosis.
- Keep your surroundings clean and free of stagnant water to curtail mosquito breeding.
- Wash greens carefully; avoid consumption of uncooked food from out (where hygiene is suspect) and unsterile water.