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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
7577	24.07.2023	24.07.2023	Delhi	The Times of India English Newspaper 24 th July, 2023/Page No. 05
Title:	City sees surge in conjunctivitis cases, Delhi			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to SSU- Delhi			

Not just dengue, this monsoon there has been a sudden surge in eye infection or conjunctivitis cases as well. Doctors from various city-based hospitals noted that during past one week to 10 days, there had been a sudden jump in cases.

"On average, I am seeing 4-5 cases every day. It is like an acute conjunctivitis epidemic this time. This happens in rains and usually a wave like this is seen in every two years. Past few years it did not happen because people were taking precautions and keeping distance due to Covid-19 but this year it is huge in numbers. Also, the rains didn't happen past few years as much as it is happening this year," said Dr Sanjay Dhawan, HoD, ophthalmology, Max hospital.

Patients with pink and watery eyes have been flocking to hospital OPDs. And experts have noted that this year infection appears to be more virulent, with major government and private hospitals reporting 15-20 cases daily, which is three times higher than the average number of cases.

"This time around, the infection has been more severe, associated with membrane formation and haemorrhages (blood spots). This rise in cases may be attributed to

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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changes in weather conditions, hygiene practices, or the emergence of antibiotic-resistant strains," Dr Prashaant Chaudhry, HOD ophthalmology, Aakash Healthcare.

Dr Vandana Khullar, senior ophthalmologist, PSRI Hospital noted that this time eye infection is severe, affecting both eyes and causing severe symptoms like marked swelling, unable to open eye, pain, and extreme redness.

Another factor that is leading to rise of conjunctivitis in the national capital is water stagnation associated with heat and humidity which is causing its rapid spread.

Busting a myth, Dr Dhawan said conjunctivitis spreads by direct or indirect contact, and neither wearing sunglasses nor not looking into other's eyes checks its spread.

Experts also highlighted that this year there is a high probability of mutation of virus leading to rise in conjunctivitis cases.

"Mutation of virus always happens in case of conjunctivitis and each time a new strain comes up; it spreads more and faster. If mutation was not there, then people would have developed resistance and it wouldn't have spread as much. And this time too, there are chances that a new variant has emerged," added Dr Dhawan.

Usually infections like conjunctivitis requires a week to two for recovery however, experts noted that this time, there has been a need for more antibiotics.

"Usually, conjunctivitis is self-limiting, however, this time around with the strain being more virulent calls for the use of antibiotics. Using antibiotics helps shorten the duration of the infection, reduce its severity, and prevent complications," said Dr Prashaant.

Dr Dhawan pointed that virus does not respond to antibiotics, it is given to prevent bacterial infections so that this does not aggravate further, and anti-inflammatory drugs take care of the inflammation.

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