

Hospital admissions jump by 15% due to bad air quality

Many Bear The Brunt Of Viral Diseases In City

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Mumbai: A nagging cough worsened by air pollution has left Sadananand Bhaskar (71) housebound for nearly two months. The Dadar resident says this December he was diagnosed with asthma, a debilitating lung condition that severely restricted mobility and increased hospital visits manifold. He required hospitalisations twice since then.

Thousands of Mumbai-kars have been bearing the brunt of viral diseases and respiratory ailments since December, their conditions aggravated by a deadly cocktail of widespread construction activity, bad air quality, low humidity levels combined with a prolonged dip in day and night temperatures. As a result, doctors say, patient footfalls in chest outpatient departments

Max temp drops further, min still high

Mumbai: The city's maximum temperature on Wednesday dropped further, compared to the last two days. But the minimum temperature continued to be on the higher side. The maximum recorded by IMD Colaba and Santacruz on Wednesday dropped to below 30 degrees Celsius. This was significant considering that the maximum recorded two days back had crossed 35 degrees.

The maximum recorded at Colaba was 29.2 degrees and at Santacruz, 28.8 degrees. IMD officials said the drop in maximum temperature was due to coastal winds turning northerly to north-westerly. The minimum recorded at Colaba and Santacruz was 21.2 degrees and 20 degrees respectively. At Colaba, the minimum was 1.7 degrees above normal, and at Santacruz, it was 2.5 degrees above normal. **TNN**

had increased by 5-30%, while admissions rose by at least 15%. The average duration of hospitalisation ranged between 8-10 days, with some, including people with no prior history of lung ailments, requiring aggressive intervention, such as oxygen support and non-invasive ventilation.

A 34-year-old Bandra resident rushed to a chest specialist when cough left him breathless. The doctor was surprised to see that he had full-blown pneumonia. "Any delay would have landed him in serious life-risk," said his wife.

She said he used to be a smoker but never suffered such a critical lung problem before. They spent nearly Rs 2.5 lakh on treatment.

Physicians say there was a visible spurt in cases of people with prolonged dry cough, throat irritation, allergic bronchitis, rhinitis and asthma. "In my OPD, people who came with severe cough, bronchospasms, and needed nebulising treatment to even ventilator must have gone up by 12-13% this season," said Dr Sail Bendre, pulmonologist at Balabhai Nanavati Hospital, Vile

Parle. Chest and allergy expert Dr Sanjeev Mehta said at one point he had three patients with bad pneumonia in a ward. "Multiple zones of their lungs were badly affected," he said. The doctor added that this season he has witnessed a near 50% increase in hospitalisation of people with lung ailments.

Dr Amita Athavale, who heads the department of chest medicine at Parel's KEM Hospital, said persistent lower humidity levels of less than 40% can spell bad news for respiratory infections. "That's when mucous starts accumulating and worsening things for lung patients. But lack of hydration, low vitamin B complex and D levels can make things worse," she said. Chest physician Dr Sujeet Rajan concurred that Mumbai-kars are not used to continuous minimum temperature levels of 17-20 degrees. "Many of these infections, particularly bronchitis, are the body's defence system trying to fight it," he said. Dr Athavale advocated pneumococcal and influenza vaccination, particularly for the elderly.