

ADVISORY ON TOMATO FLU

BY



Business Resilience Council
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Tomato Flu Advisory

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What is Tomato Flu?

The tomato flu or Tomato fever is a rare viral disease that results in blisters resembling tomatoes. This virus was first reported in the Kollam district of Kerala on May 6, 2022 and has since been detected in other states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Haryana and Odisha as well. This rare viral infection is in an endemic state. Govt. of India has issued guidelines to spread awareness among people as part of vigilant management system and prevent further outbreak of the virus. So far 100 cases of the Tomato Flu virus has been reported in the country that includes 82 cases in Kerala district.

Although the symptoms of tomato flu virus are somewhat similar to those of COVID-19 that includes fever, fatigue, vomiting, diarrhea and body ache, rashes on the skin the virus is not related to SARS-CoV-2. Health experts have suggested that the virus is a clinical variant of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD). While researchers are still figuring out more about the virus recent report suggest that it is a Coxsackie A 17 like virus belonging to the group of enteroviruses.

Who is at risk?

From observation it has been found that the virus mostly infect children aged between 1-9 years and adults with weaker immunity.

Is the virus lethal?

The virus is considered as non-life-threatening with no major complication detected so far. Till now no death has been reported. Since the tomato flu virus is self-limiting its signs and symptoms resolve after a few days with proper medical help. Following medical treatment the infected person will eventually recover from the virus.

How the virus spread?

This virus is said to be less contagious than the Covid-19 and is likely to spread through close contact. The incubation or isolation period of 5-7 days should to be followed from the onset of any symptom to prevent the spread of infection to other children or adults. Basically young children are prone to this infection through use of nappies, touching unclean surfaces, as well as putting things directly into the mouth. Given its similarities to hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD), if the outbreak of tomato flu in children is not controlled and prevented, transmission might lead to serious consequences by spreading in adults as well.

The myths surrounding tomato flu

Contrary to the myth consumption of tomato has nothing to do with the tomato flu virus. The virus has been termed as Tomato flu because the appearance of blisters on the body resemble tomato in size and colour.

What are the causes of Tomato flu?

Till now no specific causes have been found that can lead to the virus as health officials are still investigating on it.

What are the symptoms of Tomato flu?

- The primary symptoms of tomato flu observed in children are similar to Chikungunya that includes **high fever, body ache, rashes, intense pain in joints and swelling**.
- **Skin irritation** is one of the most common symptoms of the virus and infected Person gets red and painful **blisters** throughout the body.
- **Abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and the discoloration of hands, knees and buttocks** are also some of the symptoms infected individuals tend to experience.

Diagnosis and further treatment

As of now there is no specific treatment for Tomato flu. For person showing the above-mentioned symptoms two types of tests are being done: **molecular** and **serological tests which** are generally done for cases of Dengue, Chikungunya, Zika virus. And Once these viral infections are ruled out the possible infection with Tomato flu gets confirmed. Since there are a lot of similarity between Tomato flu and the other two viruses (Dengue and Chikungunya) therefore the treatment is also mostly similar.

Patients are advised to isolate rest, stay hydrated, drink warm water and plenty of fluids and use hot water sponge for the relief of skin irritation and rashes. Paracetamol is recommended in case of fever and bodyache.

Precautions and preventive measures

Since the virus is contagious and with no antiviral drugs or vaccines available at the moment for the treatment of tomato flu it is mandatory to follow careful isolation of confirmed or suspected cases and other precautionary steps to prevent the outbreak of the tomato flu virus.

- To prevent the spread of the virus maintenance of basic hygiene and sanitization of surrounding areas of infected person is necessary.
- Parents are advised to refrain their infected child from making physical contact with other non-infected children such as sharing toys, clothes, food or any other items.
- Adults suffering from comorbidity or with weaker immunity are advised to take extra precautions and maintain physical distance in public places.

Preventive measures for offices, factory workers field workers

- Within office spaces or factory site regular cleaning and disinfecting of surroundings that could have been contaminated with the virus from someone who is infectious.
- Field workers and factory workers should use sanitizers and soaps regularly and maintain proper hygiene.
- Also avoid coming in contact with any child laborer on site since the virus mostly infect children.

- In case of suspicion of someone contracting the virus or showing symptoms immediately seek medical advice and isolate the person until recovery.

Info source

The Union Health Ministry, Govt of India

<https://weather.com/en-IN/india/health/news/2022-08-24-heres-all-you-need-to-know-about-tomato-flu>

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