



Early Symptoms vs Warning Signs

When Does Dengue Become Life-Threatening? Doctor Answers

High fever, body pain, headache, weakness, pain behind the eyes, nausea, and skin rashes are some of the commonly reported in the first few days. Since these symptoms are similar to seasonal infections, people underestimate the seriousness of the disease in its early stage. Dengue is one of the most common mosquito-borne illnesses seen during the monsoon and post-monsoon season. It is caused by the dengue virus which spreads through the bite of infected Aedes mosquitoes. The illness usually begins with symptoms that are similar to a regular viral infection. High fever, body pain, headache, weakness, pain behind the eyes, nausea, and skin rashes are some of the commonly reported in the first few days. Since these symptoms are similar to many seasonal infections, people sometimes underestimate the seriousness of the disease in its early stage. Dr. Neha Rastogi, Senior Consultant, Infectious Disease, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram, told NDTV that most dengue patients recover well with proper rest, hydration, and timely medical care. However, the illness can become dangerous if warning signs are ignored. What makes dengue tricky is that the condition may worsen just when the fever starts improving. "Typically, between day four and day seven, some patients enter what we call the 'critical phase.' This is the period where close monitoring becomes extremely important," adds Dr. Rastogi.

Understanding The Early Symptoms Of Dengue

In the beginning, dengue mainly causes flu-like symptoms. A sudden high fever is usually the first sign. This may be accompanied by severe body aches, joint pain, headache, and pain behind the eyes. Some people may also experience nausea, vomiting, tiredness, or a mild skin rash. These early symptoms can make patients feel extremely uncomfortable, but they are usually manageable at home with medical advice, adequate fluids, and proper rest. Doctors generally recommend staying hydrated, monitoring temperature, and avoiding self-medication, especially painkillers that may increase the risk of bleeding. At this stage, most patients do not develop severe complications. However, it is still important to stay alert because dengue can change rapidly within a few days.

When Dengue Enters The Critical Phase

One of the biggest misconceptions about dengue is that a falling fever means recovery has started. In reality, doctors often become more cautious when the fever begins to settle. The critical phase usually develops between

the fourth and seventh day of illness. During this time, the blood vessels may start leaking fluid, which can affect blood pressure and organ function. Platelet counts may also begin to fall. While not every patient with low platelets becomes critically ill, a sudden drop combined with worsening symptoms can signal severe dengue. This phase requires careful monitoring of platelet levels, hydration status, urine output, and overall clinical condition. Timely medical supervision can help prevent complications before they become serious.

Warning Signs That Should Never Be Ignored

Certain symptoms act as red flags and require immediate medical attention. Persistent vomiting is one of the early warning signs that the illness may be progressing. Severe abdominal pain is another symptom that should not be ignored. Some patients may feel unusually sleepy, confused, restless, or weak. Bleeding symptoms, including bleeding from the gums or nose, blood in vomit, or black stools, can indicate a more severe form of dengue. Breathlessness may also occur due to fluid accumulation in the chest or abdomen.

When Dengue Becomes Life-Threatening

Severe dengue can lead to serious complications such as Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever and Dengue Shock Syndrome. In these conditions, patients may experience internal bleeding, severe fluid leakage, organ damage, or a sudden drop in blood pressure.

When blood pressure falls dangerously low, the body may not receive enough oxygen-rich blood, leading to shock. This is the stage where dengue can become life-threatening if treatment is delayed. Patients with severe dengue often need hospital care, intravenous fluids, close monitoring, and sometimes intensive care support. The good news is that with early diagnosis and proper fluid management, most patients recover successfully.

Early Recognition Saves Lives

The key to preventing severe dengue is recognising warning signs early rather than waiting for symptoms to worsen. Monitoring the patient carefully during the critical phase is more important than focusing only on fever reduction. Simple measures such as drinking enough fluids, following medical advice, avoiding unnecessary medicines, and seeking immediate care for warning symptoms can make a major difference.

"The reassuring part is that with timely intervention and careful fluid management, most patients recover well. The focus should be on early recognition of warning signs and seeking medical care without delay," added Dr. Rastogi.

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Feeling Bloating After Meals?

Harvard-Trained Doctor Explains How Fried Foods Affect Your Gut

Harvard and Stanford-trained gastroenterologist and hepatologist Saurabh Sethi explains how certain foods may be silently affecting gut health and slowing digestion.

Digestive problems like bloating, acidity and heaviness after meals have become increasingly common. Now, Harvard and Stanford-trained gastroenterologist and hepatologist Saurabh Sethi is explaining how certain foods may be silently affecting gut health and slowing digestion.

In a recent video shared on social media, Dr Sethi speaks about one common type of food that, according to him, can make bloating worse: fried food.

"This food slows down your gut and makes bloating worse," he says in the video.

According to Dr Sethi, fried foods are harder for the body to digest because they slow gastric emptying, the process through which food moves from the stomach into the intestine. When digestion slows down, food remains in the stomach and gut for a longer period, leaving people feeling heavy and uncomfortable after eating.

"This can lead to heaviness, bloating and reflux," he explains. He also says that regularly

consuming deep-fried foods may negatively affect the gut microbiome over time.

Dr Sethi further explains that making small changes to eating habits can significantly improve digestion.

"Better motility, less reflux, lighter digestion," he says while discussing the benefits of reducing fried food intake.

Instead of deep-fried meals and snacks, he recommends healthier cooking methods such as baking, grilling, sautéing, or using an air fryer.

This is not the first time Dr Sethi has spoken about foods linked to gut health and digestion. In an earlier video shared in March, the doctor revealed some of his favourite high-fibre foods and snacks that support digestion and help prevent bloating.

His list included seeds such as chia seeds, basil or sabja seeds, pumpkin seeds, and ground flaxseeds. He also recommended fibre-rich snacks like walnuts, dry-roasted peanuts, and fox nuts or makhanas, which are considered easier to digest than many packaged snacks. Air-popped popcorn also made it to the list because it is lighter than butter-loaded or fried popcorn.

Among grains, Dr Sethi recommended steel-cut oats, sprouted bread, and sourdough bread for better digestion and long-lasting energy. He also mentioned plant-based proteins like tofu and tempeh.

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Sedentary Weekdays, Intense Weekends

Doctors Explain Why Young Professionals Face High Injury Risks

The biggest issue is that people are trying to compensate for an entire week of inactivity in one or two days. The body does not adapt instantly to sudden bursts of strain," Dr Skand Sinha, a senior orthopaedic surgeon and professor at the Sports Injury Centre of VMMC and Safdarjung Hospital, told PTI. "We are coming across many such patients in our OPD," he said. He said many patients are influenced by social media fitness trends, marathon culture and corporate wellness challenges, but of-

ten ignore gradual progression in training and conditioning. Several international studies have highlighted the growing risks associated with sedentary work patterns and sporadic high-intensity exercise.

A 2022 review published in The American Journal of Medicine noted that "weekend warriors" - recreational athletes who compress physical activity into one or two weekly sessions - are more prone to acute and chronic sports injuries because of relative deconditioning

and inconsistent training.

Dr Abhimanyu Kumar, senior consultant of orthopaedics at Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science and Research, said modern corporate wellness culture, though well-intentioned, is contributing to injury patterns among office-goers.

"Employees constrained by long work hours often cram intense workouts into weekends. This 'weekend warrior' behaviour, marked by minimal weekday movement followed by extreme

exertion, leaves people vulnerable to tendon strain, ligament injuries and back pain," he said. Kumar said the answer lies in shifting from sporadic bursts of exercise to a "corporate athlete" mindset focused on regular movement and sustainable fitness habits. Research published in BMC Public Health also found that office workers spend nearly 10.6 hours a day sitting, underlining the sedentary lifestyle increasingly linked to musculoskeletal problems and poor physical conditioning.

Senior orthopaedic surgeon Dr O P Meena of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital said preventive measures and proper warm-up routines play a crucial role in reducing sports injuries.

"It is encouraging that urban populations are embracing physical activity, but the value of proper warm-up and stretching protocols should not be underestimated," he said.

According to Meena, warm-ups should ideally be done within 15 minutes before activity and should be intense enough to induce mild sweating without causing fatigue.

"Warm-up and stretching improve blood flow to tissues, muscle flexibility, nerve impulse transmission and

joint mobility, reducing the chances of sprains and strains. Consistency is the key to achieving long-term gains and reducing injury risk," he said.

He also stressed the importance of adequate rest and structured rehabilitation under medical supervision whenever injuries occur.

Sinha said increasing participation in amateur sports without proper preparation or guidance has led to a rise in muscle strains, ligament injuries, ankle sprains, tendinitis, lower back pain and shoulder injuries. He advised a combination of general warm-ups such as jogging, skipping, cycling or brisk walking along with dynamic mobility exercises including

leg swings, arm circles, hip rotations and high knees.

"Sport-specific activation and neuromuscular training involving balance, agility, landing mechanics and strength exercises are equally important for preventing knee and ankle injuries," he said.

Sinha recommended at least 10 minutes of warm-up before sports activities, avoiding sudden maximal effort, and maintaining two weekly strength-conditioning sessions along with mobility and balance training. "Adequate hydration and proper sleep are also essential because injury prevention is largely about strength, coordination and fatigue resistance," he added.

