

## Swine flu cases shot up in Mumbai's western suburbs in two weeks, say doctors

Mumbai city news: Dr Tanu Singhal, an infectious disease expert at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Andheri, said she gets 20 patients suffering from flu every day, of whom 10 test positive for H1N1 virus

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**ht** Yesha Kotak  
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Heavy rain in the city has led to a rise in swine flu cases in the western suburbs in the past two weeks, according to doctors.

Dr Tanu Singhal, an infectious disease expert at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Andheri, said she gets 20 patients suffering from flu every day, of whom 10 test positive for H1N1 virus.

“The situation is much different compared to last year. This year, H1N1 virus is at its peak. Although I don’t know the exact figures, there were fewer cases last year,” she added.

“In the past two to three weeks, there has been at least a 50% rise in cases of H1N1,” said Vasant Nagvekar, infectious disease expert at Lilavati hospital, Bandra, adding he has been treating patients suffering from swine flu since May 15.

“We usually get cases of influenza during winter. The H1N1 virus is at its peak between September and December. I didn’t expect to come across these many cases at this time of the year,” said Dr Prahlad Prabhudesai, consultant chest physician, Lilavati Hospital, Bandra.

Ishwar Satwani, 64, a resident of Khar, who is among five members of his family suffering from swine flu, believes he got infected at a seminar he attended recently.

After spending 25 days in Nanavati Hospital, Vile Parle, he considers himself lucky to be alive. “I had developed severe respiratory problems,” said Satwani.

Doctors said since some of the symptoms of swine flu include vomiting, fever, throat pain, body ache and diarrhoea, patients often confuse it with viral fever or gastroenteritis. But a person with very high fever (104 degrees Celsius and above) and chills needs to get himself tested for H1N1, say doctors. “Flu spreads rapidly, so it is advisable that people take precautions like wearing a face mask. Relatives of patients need to use a hand wash all the time to ensure the virus doesn’t spread,” said Prabhudesai.

“We expect people to develop an immunity towards the virus in the next few years. That will bring down the death toll too,” said Singhal.