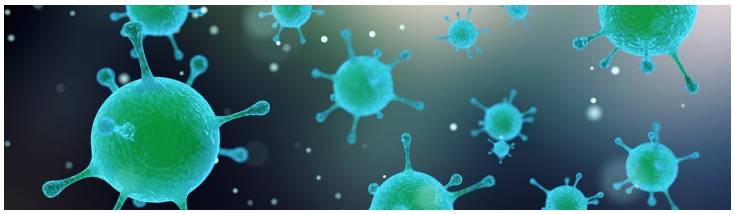
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Swine flu raises its ugly head again in India!

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The country has registered 12,460 swine-flu cases so far, this year, as compared to 1,786 cases reported last year



Singapore: Affecting well over 12,000 people so far, Swine flu is sweeping across the Indian subcontinent. The virus has claimed nearly 600 lives so far, with Maharashtra reporting nearly 50 percent of all deaths. Expressing concern, government officials said that they are closely monitoring the seasonal influenza outbreak situation and were in regular touch on the issue.

Maharashtra alone accounted for almost 50 per cent of all deaths, as it recorded 284 deaths out of the 2,324 cases said a government report. The country has registered 12,460 swine-flu cases so far this year as compared to 1,786 cases reported last year. So far, Gujarat recorded 75 deaths out of 289 infections, while in Kerala 63 out of 1,127 people succumbed to H1N1 complications. In Rajasthan, 59 persons died out of 407 reported cases. Karanataka had 15 deaths out of 2,377 cases, while Telangana and Tamil Nadu registered 17 and 15 deaths out of 1,443 and 2,896 cases, respectively.

A central rapid response team was deployed in Maharashtra on June 27 to investigate the rising trend of influenza in the state and to provide required assistance which is resulting in reduced mortality currently.

To ensure wider availability and accessibility of Oseltamivir, the drug for treatment of influenza, has been put in schedule H1 on June 22, which means they can be sold by all licensed chemists against prescription. Earlier, they belonged to Schedule X category, wherein only certain selected pharmacies were authorised to stock and sell the medicine.

In 2016, the country recorded 265 swine flu deaths, whereas in 2015 a total of 42,592 cases and 2,990 deaths were reported. The World Health Organization called it a pandemic in 2009 after it started rapidly spreading globally. India was worst affected in by it in 2015 with 42,592 cases of which 3,000 were fatal.

A viral illness, Swine flu, causes serious health problems. Symptoms include – fever, cough sore throat, stuffy or runny nose, body aches, headache, chills, etc. Treatment is mainly symptomatic. The virus transmits from humans to humans through saliva and mucus particles – sneezing, coughing, touching a germ-covered surface and then touching their nose or eyes.

Some of the proposed preventive measures for the disease include covering the mouth while sneezing and avoiding direct or indirect contact with people showing symptoms of seasonal influenza. A blood test for the H1N1 virus needs to be immediately done if one suffers from flu for more than three days.