

- Virus

Newer clinical signs of Covid: Hearing problems, dry mouth

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MUMBAI: Difficulty in hearing, dry mouth and reduced saliva secretion, long-lasting headaches are some of the newer symptoms of Covid-19 infection. Doctors are also seeing patients coming in with gastrointestinal problems, pink eye, conjunctivitis, rashes and skin irritation.

“Gastrointestinal symptoms have been closely associated with the Delta variant of the virus,” said Maharashtra’s Covid-19 task force member Dr Rahul Pandit, while making a presentation at a conference chaired by chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday. “In many cases, patients suffering from diarrhoea did not suspect that they had Covid-19 and by the time they were diagnosed with the infection, they spread it to the entire family,” he said, adding that extremely dry mouth and stubborn headaches are also some of the symptoms that may go ignored.

He added that doctors have to be vigilant about such newer presentations in addition to the classic Covid-19 symptoms such as cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fatigue, loss of smell, loss of taste among others.

Experts at the conference said the profile of fever in Covid-19 patients differs widely. While some patients present with only one episode of fever, others may have recurring episodes. Dr Suhas Prabhu, member of the state’s paediatric task force, said children have been less impacted during both waves. “However, the fear that they may be disproportionately impacted in the third wave arises from the fact that they are unvaccinated. If schools are opened, their exposure will increase,” he said, adding that schools must avoid contact sports, not let children share lunch boxes and emphasise on distancing.

“Parents should not send their children to school if they have even minor symptoms or are feeling unwell,” said Prabhu. Medical experts stressed on use of masks to prevent infection. Task force member Dr Shashank Joshi said wearing masks is the biggest weapon that we have against Covid-19. Pandit also echoed the same thoughts. “We must stay vigilant and not take Covid lightly in order to fight the virus,” he said, adding that the public should wear masks all the time, and have at least two to three fresh masks on them. “If the mask becomes wet due to humidity, it will not serve the purpose. It is important to replace masks when they are wet,” he said.