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Kids falling sick due to weather changes

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Doctors say that the change in weather, rising humidity and temperature fluctuations are causing children to fall sick, as viruses thrive under the changing conditions.

Dr Rim Al Choughri, specialist paediatrics, Burjeel Hospital, Abu Dhabi, says: "Children are falling sick mainly because of the sudden change in weather. The transition from cold conditions to hot weather can trigger viral infections. As we kept to our homes for the last two years and adhered to other Covid-19 restrictions, immunity has become low. When children are exposed to germs, it sometimes stimulates the immune system. This has a similar effect to a vaccine. Germs in the environment also become active due to weather changes. This is why we are facing a lot of cases of infection right now."

Cold and damp weather conditions also hamper the normal immune mechanisms of the body, especially the mucosal barrier of the respiratory tract. "Rhinovirus, influenza and the respiratory syncytial viruses are on the surge causing an increase in the number of children falling sick," says Dr Swathi Eluri, specialist paediatrician, Aster Clinic Abu Hail. "The change in climate, the decreased immunity in the children compared to adults, their proximity (to other kids) in the schools and poor ventilation is also making them more vulnerable."

Symptoms range from common cold, sore throat, headache, myalgia and fever to vomiting and diarrhoea. "In severe cases it may lead to bronchitis and pneumonia. Symptoms are present for a week and even longer for kids with previously known allergies," adds Eluri.

Dr Jobby Jacob, specialist paediatrician, Medeor Hospital, Dubai, said: "If a child is suffering from fever, vomiting/diarrhoea, pink eyes, persistent cough, rashes on hands/foot and mouth, it is a good idea to keep them at home as it will help them recover faster and prevent the spread of infection to other kids. It would be prudent to return to school after 24 hours of symptom-free period in case of fever, vomiting, or diarrhoea. In case of rashes/pink eye, it is better to wait for the symptoms to resolve or heal completely."

Dr Kedar Patnekar, specialist paediatrician at Prime Medical Centre, Burjuman Branch, says: "I would recommend all parents to get their children vaccinated for flu. It's very important, especially in this season. As long as it is taken when the child is asymptomatic it will protect them from recurrent infections. Parents should visit the doctor as soon as the symptoms start."