

Mail Today

Call & get cured when you are down with flu

THE Influenza Foundation of India (IFI) has launched a flu helpline in Delhi to provide information on viral flu, which is spreading fast in this changing season.

Just dial "1800-11-0678" for the helpline, launched this February, to get updates on various kinds of flu. It also provides tips on protection against nearly 200 airborne viral infections.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has confirmed an increase in the number of flu cases reported at government hospitals in the last two months. Private hospitals are also treating an

By **Neetu Chandra** in New Delhi

increased number of flu patients. "Flu patients have increased in our hospital. Eight to 10 patients come for consultation everyday. Flu symptoms are often more severe than cold symptoms and can lead to complications in the lungs and hospitalisation in extreme cases," said Dr P.S. Narang of Max Hospital.

Dr A.K. Prasad, IFI, says self-medication should always be avoided in cases of flu. "Since the initial time is crucial, one should call the helpline for flu-related

queries so that the patient is properly guided within minimum time," he said.

Flu or influenza is a contagious viral infection of the respiratory tract. While the illness may be temporary and short-lived, it is estimated to infect between five and 15 per cent of Indians every year.

"MCD hospitals are getting 10 to 15 cases of flu in this season. The infection increases at this time and people confuse it with common cold. This is the time when the virus gets conducive conditions to attack," V.K. Monga, chairman of health committee, MCD, said.

KNOW THE VIRUS

SYMPTOMS: Flushed face, body ache, chills, headache, nausea and lack of energy

HIGH RISK GROUP: Mainly people above 50 years, children between six months and two years, women more than three months pregnant

PREVENTION: A yearly vaccine for those at high-risk, including children. Vaccine is available as a flu shot or a nasal spray-type flu vaccine