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Beware of your sugarcane fix

With cases of gastroenteritis rising, civic agencies crack down on vendors

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SUGARCANE JUICE might be refreshing, but not for your stomach.

With cases of gastroenteritis — stomach flu — spiralling to 13,377 this year, civic agencies have come down heavily on unlicensed sugarcane crushers and water vendors in Delhi.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has recently removed 389 unlicensed sugarcane crushers and over 100 water vendors from various parts of Delhi.

"Uncovered, peeled sugarcane is the best source for growth of bacteria and other parasites — a major source of gastroenteritis and cholera," said Dr VK. Monga, chairperson, medical relief and public health commission, MCD.

"Worse still, the vendors use ice imported from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, where there is absolutely no check on water safety," Monga said.

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these unlicensed vendors don't maintain any safety standards.

"Due to contaminated water and food, water borne diseases like cholera, acute viral hepatitis (jaundice) and food poi-

soning are very common during this season," he said.

So far, 56 cases of cholera have also been reported in Delhi, of which eight are out-station cases. The real figures

may be higher than those with the MCD as many people go to private hospitals and doctors.

Experts are worried the figures may rise as temperatures peak in May-June.

Dr Vivek Raj, director and senior consultant gastroenterologist at Max Healthcare receives two-three new cases of gastroenteritis a day.

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WHAT IS GASTROENTERITIS

- Gastroenteritis, also known as the stomach flu, is an inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract caused by common viruses, bacteria and parasites.
- Infection by such biological agents may lead to acute gastroenteritis, cholera and viral hepatitis.

SYMPTOMS

- Acute diarrhoea accompanied by vomiting, abdominal pain and occasional fever.

TREATMENT

- For dehydration, ORS is the best medicine. It is composed of 1 level teaspoon of salt and 4 heaped teaspoons of sugar added to 1 litre of water.

MCD FIGURES OF GASTROENTERITIS

	2008	2009
January	2569	2834
February	2453	2197
March	3558	3311
April	5844	5035