

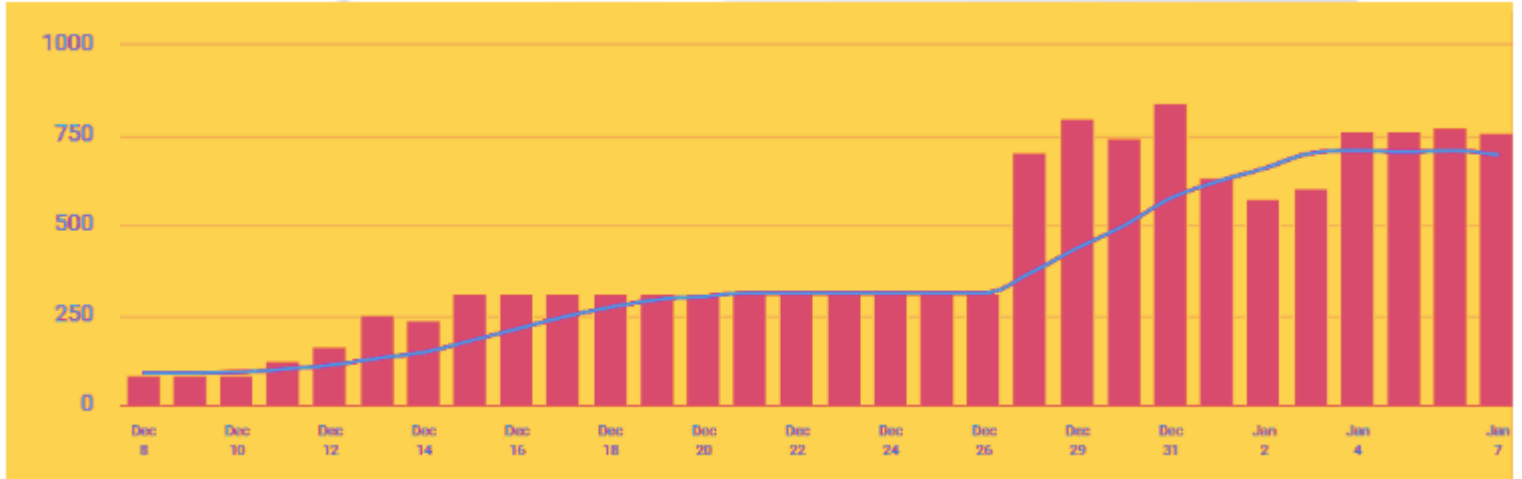


SPECIAL ADVISORY "Rise of COVID-19 Cases in India", 08 Jan 2024"

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Courtesy- Business India
COVID-19 cases in India (Till 7th January, 2024, 1400 hr.)

Overview

Over the past two month, India has witnessed a steady and concerning rise in COVID-19 cases, particularly notable in the state of Kerala. The emergence of the Omicron sub-variant JN.1 has prompted both state and central governments to implement stringent measures aimed at curtailing its spread. In response to this escalating situation, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has issued comprehensive guidelines for managing COVID-19 suspected or positive cases within hospital settings.

The gravity of the situation is underscored by recent data from the Health Ministry, which reported three COVID-related mortalities in a single day along with 636 fresh coronavirus cases in India. Of particular concern is the contrasting trend of a global 8 per cent decrease in deaths, while India recorded a severe 425 per cent increase, along with notable increases in Thailand (220 per cent) and Indonesia (317 per cent).

On December 18, WHO officially designated JN.1 as a sub-lineage of the BA.2.86 Omicron variant, marking it as a separate Variant of Interest. It constitutes 27.1 per cent of global sequences in week 48. India, in particular, has become a focal point with a staggering 520 per cent surge in new COVID-19 cases from November 20.



Current Scenario

India recorded 774 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, bringing the total to 4,50,17,431 since January 2020. The death toll increased by two, reaching 5,33,387, while 919 individuals recovered, totaling 4,44,79,804 recoveries. Notably, 34,660 tests were conducted on January 5, 2024, as per the Indian Council of Medical Research. The surge is attributed to a new variant and cold weather conditions, deviating from the earlier trend. The CDC underscores the global impact of the JN.1 variant, constituting 62% of COVID cases in the United States, emphasizing the need for sustained vigilance.

Despite administering 220,67,81,345 vaccinations, southern India, especially Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra, is experiencing a surge. Karnataka reported 1169 cases, Kerala 1160, Tamil Nadu 188, and Maharashtra 931.

In Maharashtra, 154 fresh COVID-19 cases were reported, with 172 patients discharged, yielding a recovery rate of 98.17% and a case fatality rate of 1.81%. Since January 1, 2024, the state recorded 139 JN.1 variant cases, contributing to 141 deaths, primarily affecting individuals above 60, with 70.92% mortality in this age group.

For a concise summary of COVID-19 case data across different states in India, kindly refer to the following link: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>. This resource provides an overview of the statewise distribution of COVID-19 cases, offering valuable insights into the current situation across the country. Stay informed and stay safe.





Understanding JN.1 variant

The JN.1 variant, genetically linked to BA.2.86, was identified by the CDC in the US, constituting less than 0.1% of SARS-CoV-2 viruses by October 2023. Despite concerns about increased transmissibility, the CDC notes no elevated health risks compared to other variants. Symptoms of the JN.1 variant include fever, runny nose, sore throat, headaches, minor gastrointestinal issues, extreme fatigue, and muscle weakness, typically improving within a week. Most cases involve mild upper respiratory symptoms, and while a loss of appetite and persistent nausea may occur, it's crucial for the public to stay calm, follow guidelines, and adhere to preventive measures, as the variant is generally mild.

Central Advisory for States

- Hygiene Emphasis: Prioritize respiratory hygiene to curb disease transmission during festivities.
Guideline Adherence: Strictly follow Union Ministry guidelines for revised COVID-19 surveillance.
Case Monitoring: Regularly report and monitor Influenza-like Illness (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) cases.
Testing Strategy: Ensure balanced testing in all districts as per COVID-19 guidelines.
Variant Vigilance: Increase RT-PCR tests, send samples for sequencing, and stay vigilant for new variants.

States are urged to stay vigilant against COVID-19, regularly reporting and monitoring district-wise Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) and Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) cases. Adequate testing, particularly increased RT-PCR tests, is advised, with positive samples to be sent for genome sequencing to INSACOG laboratories.



For a comprehensive advisory on COVID-19, please refer to the following link: https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseFramePage.aspx?PRID=1987840 This resource provides detailed information and guidelines to help you stay informed and take appropriate precautions.

State Responses to JN.1 Variant:

In Rajasthan, medical institutions are directed to monitor patients with respiratory issues, emphasizing daily uploading of information. Uttarakhand is on high alert, urging comprehensive efforts against COVID-19, while Karnataka advises vulnerable groups to wear masks and avoid crowded spaces due to the JN.1 subvariant. Maharashtra assures preparedness, planning mock drills, and encourages citizens to adhere to preventive measures during the festive season.

To safeguard public health, it is advised to consistently wear masks, practice regular hand hygiene, avoid crowded areas, and promptly consult a healthcare professional if experiencing symptoms. Businesses and organizations with a substantial workforce are recommended to reinstate temperature checks and symptom screenings for added precautionary measures.

Advisory on Booster Dose

- Senior health officials affirm there is currently no recommendation for a fourth booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in India.
The chief of the India SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG), N.K. Arora, clarifies that individuals over 60 with comorbidities and high-risk patients in this age group may consider a precautionary third dose if not already administered.

COVID Helpline Numbers

- Health Ministry- 1075
Child Care-1098
Mental Health-08046110007
Senior Citizens-14567
Ayush Covid-19 Counselling-14443
MyGov WhatsApp Helpdesk-9013151515

Designated Hospitals for Treatment of COVID 19

State governments have earmarked hospitals (Government & Private) specifically for treatment of COVID-19 with adequate arrangements. To find the details of those hospitals, please click on the following link- Mumbai

https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/coronavirus-update-bmc-allocates-covid-19-hospitals-for-elderly-vulnerable/story-unC5BL6mFDxbT4FB3pDo8K.htm| Pune

https://www.pmc.gov.in/en/covid-centers

Ahmedabad

https://ahmedabadcity.gov.in/portal/images/Static_images/homePage/Admin%20Contact%20List%20of%20Covid-19%20Private%20Hospital.pdf

Delhi

https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/covid-situation-very-serious-delhi-cm-orders-immediate-increase-in-hospital-beds-101618240237881.html

Download and Use Aarogya Setu Application to track earmarked hospitals nearby-https://aarogyasetu.gov.in/

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