COVID – 19

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment.  Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol based rub frequently and not touching your face.

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it’s important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow).

PREVENTIONS

To prevent infection and to slow transmission of COVID-19, do the following:

* Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, or clean them with alcohol-based hand rub.
* Maintain at least 1 metre distance between you and people coughing or sneezing.
* Avoid touching your face.
* Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
* Stay home if you feel unwell.
* Refrain from smoking and other activities that weaken the lungs.
* Practice physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel and staying away from large groups of people.

WHAT IS DELTA PLUS

Scientists in India are keeping a close watch on the Delta Plus variant, a mutated version of the Delta Variant of the SARS-CoV2 coronavirus. While the transmissibility of Delta Plus is being monitored and lab tests are underway to check vaccine effectiveness, experts have said Delta Plus does not appear to be more infectious than Delta.

**What is Delta Plus variant of Covid-19?**

The Delta variant, or B.1.617.2, has been largely responsible for driving the second wave of coronavirus infections, and was first identified in India. It has since mutated into the variants AY.1 and AY.2.

## ****Is Delta Plus a variant of concern?****

While the WHO lists Delta as a variant of concern, the Indian government has classified Delta Plus (AY.1) as a variant of concern in the country. Dr Agrawal said any Delta sub-lineage is a variant of concern that needs to be investigated further.

While prevalence of Delta Plus is low in India, scientists are wary of the fact that some mutations help the virus become either more transmissible, or more virulent, or both. As both AY.1 and AY.2 are descendants of Delta , they are likely to share some properties of the Delta variant, such as transmissibility. Also, the K417N mutation is present in the Beta variant, which is reported to have shown immune escape and could dodge antibodies.