All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi

Covid-19 Infection and Rhino-orbito-cerebral Mucormycosis

Guidance for patients

What is Mucormycosis? Why the concern?

• "Mucor" is a fungus which is normally present in the environment and in soil. It causes disease only when immunity is critically low.
• Mucormycosis is not a new disease. It is known to occur in patients with low immunity such as in uncontrolled diabetes, post transplant, and some cancer treatments.
• A sudden surge is being reported in Mucormycosis in cases with COVID-19. It is a rare but serious complication of Covid-19. Infection with Mucormycosis can cause loss of eye and may be life threatening.
• Mucor infection may occur during Covid-19 infection or a few weeks after recovery from Covid-19.

What are alarming symptoms to watch for?

Rhinocerebral Mucormycosis infection generally starts in the nose and may progress to the Eye and the Brain

➢ Nose and sinuses Mucor infection (relatively early disease)
  • Headache and nasal obstruction - especially if persistent or severe and not responding to pain medicines.
  • Nasal crusting and nasal discharge which could be brownish or blood tinged
  • Pain or loss of sensation on face
  • Discolouration of skin of face / localised Facial puffiness
  • Loosening of teeth/ discoloration or ulceration of palate

➢ Eye / Orbital Mucor infection (moderately advanced disease)
  • Eye swelling or redness, double vision, loss of vision, Eye pain, drooping eyelid

Do’s & Don’ts for patients

Don’ts
• Self medicate, especially steroids
• Delay reporting symptoms of Mucor
• Ignore medical advice

Do’s
• Give history of diabetes to doctor
• Get Sugar levels checked
• Watch for early signs of Mucor listed above.
• Maintain basic hygiene and cleanliness.
• Follow medical advice; Take complete course of treatment as suggested by doctor

What to do if you have these symptoms?

• Consult your doctor immediately
• Doctor will examine you clinically. If required, the doctor will take swabs from nose and test them for fungus
• If the infection is strongly suspected or confirmed, you may need treatment with antifungal medications and surgery