



Tomato Flu

Why in News?

Recently, some parts of Kerala reported **Tomato Flu** among children under five years of age.

What is Tomato Flu?

▪ About:

- The infection has been named **'tomato flu'** because of the **red, painful blisters that appear on a patient's body** and gradually enlarge to the size of a tomato.
- The 'tomato flu' is **caused by Coxsackievirus A 16**.
- It belongs to the **Enterovirus family**.
 - The enteroviruses are an ancient and important group of **RNA viruses**.
 - Humans are the only hosts for the enteroviruses (NPEVs).
- The infectious disease is **caused by intestinal viruses and is rare in adults as they usually have immune systems** strong enough to defend them from the virus.

▪ Transmission:

- Tomato flu is **very contagious** and children are at increased risk of exposure to tomato flu as viral infections are common in this age group and spread is likely to be through close contact.
- If the outbreak of tomato flu in children is not controlled and prevented, **transmission might lead to serious consequences** by spreading in adults as well.

▪ Symptoms:

- The primary symptoms observed in children with tomato flu are like those of **chikungunya**, which include **high fever, rashes, and intense pain in joints**.
- As with other viral infections, further symptoms include fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, dehydration, swelling of joints, body aches, and common **influenza**-like symptoms, which are similar to those manifested in dengue.

▪ Treatment:

- This flu is **a self-limiting one and there is no specific drug** for this.
- The treatment for tomato flu is similar to the treatment of chikungunya, dengue and hand, foot, and mouth disease.
 - Patients are advised to isolate, rest, plenty of fluids, and hot water sponge for the relief of irritation and rashes.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2017)

1. In tropical regions, Zika virus disease is transmitted by the same mosquito that transmits dengue.
2. Sexual transmission of Zika virus disease is possible.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (c)

Exp:

- Zika virus is a flavivirus which was first discovered in 1947 in monkeys and then in humans in Uganda in 1952.
- Both Zika and Dengue have similarities in terms of symptoms of fever, skin rashes, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise, and headache. In addition to this, the mode of transmission is also same for both the diseases, i.e., both are spread by *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* species of mosquitoes. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Modes of Zika Transmission
 - Mosquito bites
 - During pregnancy, from mother to child, which can cause microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects. Zika virus has also been found in breast milk.
 - Sexual transmission from infected partner. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
 - Through blood transfusion.
- **Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

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