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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

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| 4464 | 28.12.2017 | 29.12.2017 | Hyderabad Telangana | www.timesofindia.com/english https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/diphtheria-cases-in-state-see-age-shift/articleshow/62275799.cms |
| Title: | Diphtheria cases in Telangana state see age shift | | | |
| Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC | Information communicated to DSU-Hyderabad, SSU- Telangana | | | |

Health authorities of Telangana have found an age shift in the resurgence of diphtheria cases in Hyderabad and other parts of the state. Most of the cases which were confirmed positive in 2017 (134 out of 1554 suspected cases) were either adult children (10 to 16 years) or adults. Normally, diphtheria affects children in the age group 1 to 6.

Despite the age shift in the resurgence of the ailment, the Telangana Family Welfare and Immunisation department failed to launch a special drive like in the case of Rubella vaccine.

Dr G Sudheera Joint Director of Immunisation of Telangana told TOI, "The cases are not only from Hyderabad but also from other cities in the state and neighbouring states. Fever Hospital is a tertiary hospital where the cases are sent. We have observed an age shift among the patients getting affected. Adult children are getting infected. People are not taking booster doses due to which there is an age shift. However, no deaths have been reported. In areas like Old City, the cases may be more as the precipitating factors like crowding and malnutrition add up. However, we are yet to take a call on conducting a special drive for diphtheria immunization."

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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The Universal Immunization Programme mandates that children below one year shall be given three doses of the Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis vaccine. Later, two booster doses between 1 to 2 years and 5 to 6 years should be given. However, since the coverage of immunization decreased in the third phase when compared to the first and second, most of the affected are above 10 to 16 years.

Experts are advising booster vaccine for adults. "A mass immunisation programme has to be taken up. Telangana has been witnessing resurgence of diphtheria cases in the past three years. The immunity of toxoid vaccines will last only for seven years," said an official of the health department.

According to the official, "There is no proper vaccination done in the Old City . There is less focus by officials there also due to resistance from the locals. A special focus is needed in that area."

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