

ADDED SAFETY

Double masking key to beating double mutant

Three Covid Versions Are In Circulation In Gujarat: Experts

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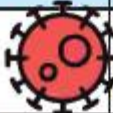
Wearing double masks, ensuring social distancing, putting precautions in place at home in case visitors drop by, and avoiding crowded areas are the key to navigating this pandemic, according to experts. In Gujarat, three Covid virus versions have been in circulation over the past few months, according to the information published on the website of the GISAID, a worldwide Covid information collaboration platform. The information on Covid variants found in Gujarat has been reported to the GISAID by a team of scientists of the Indian SARSCoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (INSACOG). It is a grouping of 10 national laboratories established by the Union ministry of health.

A cursory glance at the information available on the public platform suggests that there are 34 variants of the double mutant Indian SARSCoV-2 B.1.617; one variant of the B.1.525 SARS-CoV-2 which was first detected in Nigeria and the UK in December 2020; and four variants of the B.1.351 which was mainly found in South Africa. “One key question that bothers us today is whether these mutations if present in the same state together can overcome the natural immunity from past infections,” says a public health expert, speaking on the condition of anonymity. “It is a crucial area of study and Covid samples need to be genetically sequenced here to detect their infection rate and epidemiology so that we can plan ahead.”

Last week, INSACOG had updated GISAID about 529 variants of the double mutant B.1.617+ Covid virus in Maharashtra, 62 variants in Karnataka, and 133 variants in West Bengal. The Gujarat virological data was submitted to the GISAID in February. According to the GISAID, the first report of the B.1.617's presence in Gujarat was reported on February 2 this year with three samples testing positive for the double mutant. On February 3, two samples showed the mutant's presence; and then on February 6, three more samples showed the double mutant virus.


The GISAID platform is maintained by the governments of Germany, the official host; Singapore; and the US. It provides open access to genomic data of influenza viruses and the coronavirus responsible for Covid-19 pandemic.

MUTANTS PRESENT IN GUJARAT NOW


Type of Covid virus detected in state	Where was it detected first	Variants in Gujarat
B.1.617	This mutant was detected in India 	34
B.1.525	This variant was first detected in Nigeria and UK in December 2020	1
B.1.351 	This variant emerged with an unusually large number of mutations in South Africa.	4

STEPS TO PREVENT MUTANT VIRUS INFECTION

- Wearing double mask reduces exposure to the Covid virus by nearly 95 per cent. It helps in preventing leakage of air and fit the contour of the face better.
- Wearing cloth mask above a three-layer mask or wearing N95 mask and a surgical mask is suitable
- If there is Covid positive case in the family, it is very important that the person wears a mask even indoors because the virus can spread to others in the home
- Keep a mask on at home for 30 minutes if you have a visitor or an outsider coming in to work, it's possible that aerosols will be present

 There is a 90 per cent risk of infection associated with two individuals not wearing a mask. The risk gets reduced to 30 per cent if the unaffected person is wearing a mask

Keep the mask on for up to 30 minutes (especially if you are vulnerable) after you leave the sick person's space, since it's possible that aerosols will escape the room when the door is open





Patients wait in ambulances and private vehicles for admission to Dhanvantari Hospital in the city on Sunday