

**WEATHER**  
Partly cloudy; there will be light wind and humidity  
Max temp: 29°C  
Min temp: 17°C

**Sunrise:** 6.46 am  
**Sunset:** 6.20 pm  
**Moonrise:** 9.35 pm  
**Moonset:** 10.32am

**TIMINGS**  
January 30  
Rahu Kalam 4.50 pm to 6.16 pm  
Shubh Muhurat 3.24 pm to 4.50 am



“ Though the symptoms of patients with Delta are similar to that of Omicron, some of the new symptoms that we have witnessed in omicron patients are loss of appetite, gastrointestinal issues like loose motions and abdominal pain, throat pain, sneezing and runny nose. ”

— Dr Raghu J, Senior Consultant, Sakra World Hospital

# Flu or the dreaded Covid?

The much-liked Bengaluru weather can play havoc with those it chooses to get under the skin. Not only are doctors foxed while telling a regular influenza from the recent variants of Covid-19, even tests have proved to be unreliable, reports **Kumaran P.**

With one or the other member of almost every family in Bengaluru falling sick, citizens are in a fix whether it is Covid-19 or the common flu due to changing weather conditions. City doctors dissect the symptoms and advise what and when one needs to test for Covid-19 and how to take care. However, they say that it is difficult to differentiate between the delta and omicron variants of Covid-19.

Dr Pradeep Rangappa, Consultant, Intensive and Critical Care at Manipal Hospitals, Yeswanthpur, said, “It’s hard to delineate the symptoms between delta and omicron variants. Wave 2 that was predominantly caused by delta had distinctive symptoms of loss of taste and smell, which appear to be absent in the 3rd wave. Wave 2 was dreadful in affecting lungs with the need for oxygen even in younger age groups, which isn’t the case in wave 3. Omicron variant as evidenced seems to cause much milder disease with predominantly upper respiratory symptoms, fever, sore throat, headache, and body ache lasting for two-three days after which the patient starts to feel better. This

is unlike what happened during the 2nd wave where patients used to be troubled by much longer-lasting fever and its deleterious sequel.”

“The 2nd wave Covid manifested into post-Covid symptoms that caused severe fatigue, reduced tolerance to doing simple daily activities, cognitive issues affecting memory, sleep etc, which does not appear to be the

problem with the 3rd wave. Having said all this, as per data from Karnataka, gene sequencing done in 5,584 samples as of Jan 23 shows delta strain to be prevalent at 52.93 per cent and omicron at 16.67 per cent. The dampening of symptom severity possibly is largely due to the vaccine effect in ameliorating the severity and the progressive weakening of the

virus virulence,” he added.

Dr Brunda M S, Consultant, Internal Medicine, Aster CMI Hospital, said, “Comparatively, omicron tends to cause less severity than the delta variant. A majority of the patients are experiencing milder Covid symptoms and the death rate is low. Fewer patients need hospitalisation and have shown less severity. Overall omicron is causing fewer problems than the previous variants, but that doesn’t mean we should see it as less threatening. We may still end up with a number of people getting severely ill. Some of the commonly seen symptoms in omicron infections are headache, scratchy throat and mild body temperature. The omicron variant causes mild symptoms, which was not the case with delta. In delta, we have witnessed patients complaining of loss of sense and taste, which is not there in the case of omicron.”

“Compared to normal cold, Covid-19 has a longer potential incubation period and is accompanied by more varied additional symptoms like fever, chills, fatigue, headache, muscle and body aches, loss of smell or taste, nausea, diarrhoea and has a higher risk of complications and fatality. One needs to undergo testing to confirm the illness,” she added.



## When to do the test?

Dr Brunda said, “If you don’t have any symptoms, there is no need to undergo a test. However, if the symptoms persist for a day or two, one should consider taking a Covid test. To determine if a person is Covid positive or negative, one can go for the RT-PCR or rapid antigen tests. However, the rapid antigen test is considered to be a screening tool that indicates that you may be infected, but an RT-PCR test is needed to confirm the result. And, genome sequencing is needed to find out which variant you have been infected with.”

“With the advancement of research thanks to new home testing kits, it is better for all patients who have any symptoms such as the common flu to take a test as they are most likely to be infected by Covid. Covid has an extended incubation period and if people do it early, the result might show negative, whereas if the same test is conducted after five-six days, the test may come positive. It is better to repeat the test if symptoms are prevalent or if one has been in direct contact with a Covid patient.”

## The details

Dr Raghu J, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine and Infectious Disease Specialist, Sakra World Hospital, said, “Though the symptoms of patients with delta are similar to that of omicron, some of the new symptoms that we have witnessed in omicron patients are loss of appetite, gastrointestinal issues like loose motions and abdominal pain, throat pain, sneezing and runny nose as well. Respiratory distress such as reduced oxygen saturation level and breathlessness is comparatively lower than in delta.”

## Fever common among kids

Dr Rakshay Shetty, Paediatric Intensive Care Services at Rainbow Children’s Hospital, Marathahalli, said, “Fever is the most common symptom in children. Cold, cough, loose motions are other common presentations. Some young children develop seizures due to fever and get admitted. Generally, most of them are managed at home and illness settles in three-four days. Testing can be done in children with these symptoms. If fever persists beyond three days or is prevalent among children with high-risk factors, one needs to be watchful for symptoms of pneumonia.”

# The fleeting Covid third wave

We are presently at the peak of the third wave and cities like Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai are already showing signs of the curve bending with a profound drop in cases. Most major cities in southern India, though, are reaching their peak. But there is a lot that is different in the third wave compared to the second one. At about the same time during the peak of the second wave when our hospitals were full, the delta variant was rapidly replacing other strains as the dominant strain, it is becoming a blessing in disguise due to its comparatively benign nature.

The symptoms of presentation with this wave remain the same with predominantly cough, fever, sore throat and stuffy nose. Also, the number of patients landing with high levels of oxygen requirement as well as severe pneumonia has far reduced.

The boon of self-testing antigen kits has helped offload the burden on testing centres and initiate home-based care via tele-consultations for mild or moderate cases to a large extent. The RT-PCR, considered a standard, sometimes shows an S gene or N gene dropout, which acts as a surrogate for omicron before gene sequencing is done.

Treatment and our



**Dr Srivatsa Lokeshwaran,** Consultant Interventional Pulmonologist, Aster CMI Hospital, Bengaluru

an alarming escalation in hospital admissions with a loss of lives and significant morbidity.

It’s about the same time we as a unit also witnessed the first ever double lung transplant done in the state on a doctor because of extensive scarring of his lungs. In quite a contrast, this wave seems to be thankfully picking on only a small margin of the population, that too those with significant co-morbidities and ones who haven’t taken their vaccinations.

As compared to the delta variant, the omicron is causing 54 per cent less hospital admissions, 76 per cent less ICU admissions and 91 per cent reduced mortality. Also, since worldwide the omicron variant is

knowledge of what works and what not has evolved. Newer antivirals entering the arena are showing promise and older therapies like Remdesivir and steroids still holding their ground for severe or critical cases. The cocktail antibody therapy can be a life saver in patients with significant co-morbidities and not vaccinated. Also, the biggest game changer is the vaccines and the astounding vaccination coverage we have been able to achieve as a nation.

All said and done, the primary principles of staying masked, social distancing and vaccination remain the pillars of care for the pandemic until it slowly transforms itself into an endemic disease.

# Exercise: Doing it the right way for a healthy you

Exercising is bad for the joints; thus, I don’t want to do it, according to a widely held belief. Do you want to bend backwards over it?

Palak Dengla

Exercising is not damaging to your joints. In fact evidence shows that exercises strengthen the joints by generating both healthy cartilage and muscular support surrounding them, keeping them stronger for longer, as well as improving hormonal balance, controlling blood sugar, and increasing muscle strength. The stronger the muscles and tissue around your joints, the better they support and protect your joints, and if you do not



exercise, your joints will stiffen and become painful. It is critical that your muscles remain as strong as possible. If you don’t

exercise, muscles shrink and lose their girth, they weaken providing lesser support to the joints which in turn increases their load on weight bearing positions such as running, playing, walking, standing, sitting, bending, and reaching out for objects. This increases the chances of slipped disc, early degenerative diseases like arthritis, and makes you more prone to fracture. Moreover, the stability of your knees, hips, and other joints is dependent on a supporting network of muscles and ligaments. Exercises that strengthen

these muscles and ligaments will enhance your joints over time, making you less susceptible to injury. Weight is used in strength training to progressively increase muscular tone. If you’re new to training, start with bodyweight exercises and progress to weight machines, which give stability as you work out, before moving on to free weights like kettlebells or dumbbells. The following are some exercises that should be performed correctly:

### Squatting

Back up against a wall. Feet should be shoulder-width apart and your heels should be around 18 inches from the wall. Keep knees aligned with your heels rather than in front of your toes. As you squat, take a few deep breaths. Your buttocks should not fall below the level of your knees. Maintain a firm abdominal core and a flat back against the wall. As you stand up, push up through your heels rather than the balls of your feet and inhale.

### Deep lunging

If necessary, cling to your support. With one leg, take a step forward. Make sure your front knee is higher than your ankle. Never let your knee move past your ankle. Slowly lift your back heel off the floor once you’re in a secure position. Continue rising until your back knee meets your hip in a straight line. Involve your abdominal muscles by tightening them. This will assist you in maintaining a straight back while you lunge. Your front knee will be overworked if you slouch or bend forward.

### Running

Choose shoes that are robust and supportive. If possible, run on dirt, grass, gravel, or asphalt. They’re not as hard as concrete. Pay attention to any discomfort. Take a day or two off if you are experiencing greater discomfort than normal and consult your doctor.

### Jumping

A typical rule of thumb is to rest for two or three days between high-impact sports. You shouldn’t practice for more than an hour. Wearing a knee brace while practicing may be beneficial. If you have slight discomfort or swelling after practise, see your doctor.

### Walking or running up the stairs

Maintaining your stability may be achieved by taking it slowly and steadily. Assist yourself with the railing. If you use a cane, speak with your physical therapist about the best ways to use it on the stairs. Begin with a shorter workout and gradually increase the duration. Doing too much too soon might be dangerous. To fit your demands, adjust the rising height. To discover which option is best for you, consult with your Physiotherapist. They can provide particular recommendations as well as advice on best practices.

(The author is a Chief Physiotherapist at Aster RV Hospital)

## Out & About in Bengaluru



### ATTAKKALARI

#### Contemporary Dance for Kids

Want to get into your dancing shoes? This is your chance to fine tune your dance skills with Kalarippayattu, Kathak, Bharatnatyam, body conditioning and Hip Hop. The classes are open for learners of all levels and can be done from home.

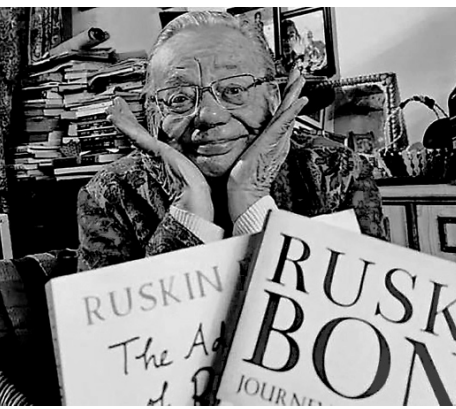
**When:** Jan 12-30, 2022  
**Where:** Online

### WRITING COURSE

#### Ruskin Bond Teaches Writing

Want to polish your writing skills by taking this special course with legendary writer Ruskin Bond. With over 70 years of experience, Bond needs no introduction. His exclusive class on Unlu, will provide you with the right guidance to become a good writer. This course has a total of 23 lessons. The masterclass will be held on the UNLU website.

**When:** Jan 12-30, 2022  
**Where:** Online



### VACCINATED JOKES

Keti Sreshth, Arnav Rao, Navin Kumar, Suhlas Navaratna and others.

Live Stand Up Comedy is back in Bengaluru. This time the comedians are vaccinated and hopefully you are too! Come out and have a good laugh in a safer space with us.

**When:** January, 26 to Feb 9  
**Where:** Cafe Azure, HSR Layout



### THARLE BOX - NIROOP MOHAN LIVE

#### IN BENGALURU

Are you bored working from home? Then it is a good time to step out with friends & family for an entertaining session. We assure Niroop Mohan, Nithin Kamath and Ashwini Ravindra will keep entertained for the evening.

**When:** Sunday, Jan 30, 2022  
**Where:** Drink N Dine, Bengaluru