

Health Buzz

VOLUME 9

Introduction

The rains may bring relief from the heat, but they also bring along their own set of health challenges. From viral infections like influenza to mosquito - borne illnesses like dengue and chikungunya, monsoon is a time when our immunity is constantly put to the test. This special edition of our newsletter from P. D. Hinduja Hospital, Khar, is your easy guide to staying healthy through the season. We'll explore why co-infections are on the rise, the most common gastrointestinal issues during monsoon, how rain-related illnesses affect children, and most importantly-how your monsoon cravings could be either a comfort or a health compromise. Learn what to eat, what to avoid, and how to take simple precautions to protect your family. Because good health doesn't have to take a back seat when the skies are pouring. Let's step into the season, prepared and informed.





COMMON MONSOON DISEASES

DR. BHARESH DEDHIA

Consultant - Intensive Care

Our annual monsoon comes between June to September, providing a respite from the scorching heat. Though it brings relief, it also brings plenty of diseases and infections too. The risk of being exposed to viruses, bacteria, and other infections is higher in monsoons compared to other seasons. Extreme humidity in the air and puddles due to stagnant water during rains enable microorganisms/ mosquito breeding to thrive in these conditions.

If these diseases go undiagnosed it can lead to complications and death too and further transmission in the community. Adopting basic hygiene, preventive measures and seeking early and accurate diagnosis followed by appropriate treatment can keep individuals and the community healthy and safe from infectious diseases.

Types of Monsoon Infections

Monsoon is the primary breeding season for mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases like Malaria, Dengue, Chikungunya, and Zika. India bears a considerable burden of mosquito-borne diseases, contributing 11% to global malaria and 34% to global dengue cases. The best way to prevent these diseases is by using regular window nets, insecticide nets and mosquito repellants, use clothes which cover arms and legs fully, and insecticide sprays if needed .

The risk of exposure to multiple air-borne viral infections such as the common flu, Influenza and other viruses that lead to viral fever, cold, cough, sore throat etc., also increases during monsoons. These are mostly mild but easily transmittable. People with a weak immune system, such as senior citizens, immunocompromised persons and children, are more prone to severe illness. Continued wearing of masks will prevent several of these infections.

Water-borne diseases like Cholera, Typhoid, Hepatitis A and E, and other gastrointestinal infections cause considerable illness and could also result in significant loss of life. This is a major cause of death in children under the age of five. Consumption of boiled water, avoiding street food, ensuring personal and environmental hygiene such as hand washing, keeping the surroundings clean, and vaccination of children are a few preventive and precautionary steps that help us keep safe from water-borne diseases. Leptospirosis is another bacterial disease that spreads due to contact with contaminated water or muck during the monsoons. If an individual has suffered an injury, they must ensure to keep it covered before stepping out of the home.

Essentially, several preventive measures on our part can help to keep most of the Monsoon related ailments at bay.





UNDERSTANDING CO-INFECTIONS IN MONSOON SEASON

DR. UMANG AGRAWAL

Consultant - Infectious Diseases

Introduction

When we think of tropical illnesses, we often imagine a single infection like dengue, malaria, or typhoid striking during the monsoon. But what if two (or more) of these diseases occur together? Such conditions are known as co-infections and have become more common in recent years. These overlapping illnesses present a serious challenge for both patients and doctors. They are harder to diagnose, take longer to treat, and often cause more complications than a single infection alone. Co-infections can confuse symptoms, delay treatment, and worsen outcomes especially when patients dismiss early warning signs or rely on self-medication.

How Do Co-Infections Happen?

Tropical regions like ours are home to several disease-causing agents like bacteria, viruses, and parasites all of which thrive in warm, humid, and crowded environments. Poor sanitation, stagnant water, changing weather patterns, and avoiding early testing catalyse the possibility of co-infections.

In many cases, the same patient may get exposed to multiple infections in a short span of time. For example:

- A mosquito bite could transmit both dengue and chikungunya.
- A person recovering from typhoid may also catch malaria due to low immunity.
- A COVID-19 infection may coincide with a viral fever or bacterial pneumonia.

These infections don't wait their turn. They often overlap and complicate the treatment plan.

Correct Diagnosis

Many tropical diseases share similar symptoms, fever being the most common symptom of all. But when a patient with fever, fatigue, and body ache walks into the clinic it is difficult to conclude if it's dengue, malaria, typhoid, or all three.

What makes co-infections risky is that symptoms may **mask each other** or **intensify together**, making the clinical picture confusing. For instance:

- Dengue lowers platelet count but so can malaria.
- Typhoid causes abdominal discomfort but so can hepatitis A or E.
- COVID-19 can mimic viral fever but also suppress immunity and invite a secondary infection.



Without thorough evaluation and timely investigations, one infection may get diagnosed, while the other goes unnoticed only to flare up later. Misdiagnosis or delayed diagnosis in co-infections can lead to:

- Worsening symptoms and hospitalisation
- Complications like internal bleeding, liver or kidney injury
- Longer recovery times
- Higher treatment costs

More importantly, patients often waste valuable time trying home remedies or partial treatments, which may suppress one infection but allow the other to spread silently.

What You Can Do

As patients and caregivers, here's how you can protect yourself and others:

- **Don't ignore prolonged fever:** If your fever doesn't subside in 2–3 days, consult a doctor - even if a test has already been done.

- **Share complete symptoms:** Even seemingly unrelated complaints (like loose motions or eye redness) can offer vital clues.
- **Do not self-medicate:** Taking antibiotics or fever reducers without medical advice can hide key symptoms and complicate diagnosis.
- **Ask your doctor about co-infections:** Especially during monsoon season, be aware that more than one infection may be present.
- **Follow up regularly:** If symptoms persist despite treatment, go back for review and retesting.

Co-infections are no longer a rare occurrence. They are a growing reality in our tropical climate. As doctors, we are trained to investigate widely and treat cautiously. But early help from the patient in the form of timely visits, honest history, and follow-ups makes all the difference.

Make sure your
gut feeling
is healthy.



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COMMON MONSOON - RELATED GUT DISEASES

DR. HARSHAD JOSHI

Consultant - Gastroenterology

As the monsoon sets in, bringing much-needed relief from the summer heat, it also ushers in a season of increased risk for gastrointestinal (GI) infections. Damp conditions, water contamination, and changes in dietary patterns contribute to a surge in digestive disorders during this time of the year. As a gastroenterologist, I often see a rise in patients complaining of symptoms like diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, and jaundice during the monsoon months. Understanding the common culprits and learning simple precautions can help you and your family stay healthy this season.

Common Monsoon-Related GI Diseases

1. Acute Gastroenteritis

This is one of the most frequent conditions during the monsoon. It is caused by ingestion of contaminated food or water, often leading to diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and fever. Viruses (like norovirus and rotavirus), bacteria (such as *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, and *Shigella*), and sometimes parasites are responsible.

2. Typhoid Fever

Caused by *Salmonella typhi*, typhoid spreads through contaminated water and food. It presents with prolonged high-grade fever, abdominal discomfort, constipation or diarrhea, and weakness. If untreated, it can lead to serious complications such as intestinal perforation.

3. Hepatitis A and E

These viral infections are transmitted through the fecal-oral route, often via contaminated drinking

water. They lead to inflammation of the liver, causing jaundice, fatigue, nausea, and dark-colored urine. While Hepatitis A is usually self-limiting, Hepatitis E can be serious, especially in pregnant women.

4. Giardiasis and Amoebiasis

Parasitic infections like giardiasis and amoebiasis become common during monsoon due to ingestion of cysts in contaminated water or undercooked food. They often present with chronic diarrhea, bloating, flatulence, and fatigue.

5. Food Poisoning

The humid climate encourages rapid bacterial growth in perishable food items. Improper storage and consumption of stale food can result in food poisoning, presenting as nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and loose stools within hours of ingestion.

Why the Monsoon Increases Risk

Contaminated Water Supply:

Overflowing drains and mixing of sewage with drinking water lines can introduce pathogens.

Street Food:

Monsoon is a popular time for consuming spicy snacks and street foods, but these are often prepared and stored in unhygienic conditions.

Reduced Immunity:

Sudden climate changes can temporarily weaken the immune system, making individuals more vulnerable to infections.

Preventive Measures

1. Safe Drinking Water

Always drink purified or boiled water. If you're unsure of the water quality, use a reliable water purifier or consume bottled water from a trusted source. Avoid ice cubes in beverages when dining out.

2. Food Hygiene

Eat freshly cooked, home-prepared meals. Avoid raw salads or uncooked foods when eating out, and be cautious with seafood, which spoils quickly in humid weather.

3. Hand Hygiene

Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before meals and after using the toilet. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used when soap is not available.

4. Avoid Street Food

As tempting as they may be, street foods and cut fruits exposed to the open air are high-risk items during monsoon.

5. Vaccination

Vaccines are available for typhoid and hepatitis A. If you haven't received them, consult your doctor—especially if you're planning travel to high-risk areas.

6. Monitor Food Storage

Refrigerate leftovers promptly. Discard food items that look or smell unusual. Avoid eating from buffets where food may have been kept out for long periods.

When to See a Doctor

Seek medical attention if you experience:

1. High fever lasting more than 2 days
2. Persistent vomiting or diarrhea
3. Signs of dehydration (dry mouth, low urine output, dizziness)
4. Jaundice (yellowing of eyes and skin)
5. Blood in stool or severe abdominal pain

Early diagnosis and timely treatment are crucial to prevent complications. In many cases, supportive care and hydration are sufficient, but some infections may require specific antibiotics or antiparasitic treatment.

**Breathe better.
Live fuller.**



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Pulmonologists

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WHY SKIN AND HAIR ISSUES INCREASE DURING THE MONSOON

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Consultant - Pulmonary Medicine

The monsoon season brings a welcome break from the scorching summer heat, but along with the rain and cool breeze comes a host of skin and hair concerns. The high levels of humidity, moisture retention, and temperature fluctuations during this season create the perfect storm for various dermatological and hair-related issues. Here's a closer look at why your skin and hair tend to act up during the monsoons - and what exactly is going on beneath the surface.

SKIN ISSUES DURING MONSOON

Increased Oil Production

High humidity levels stimulate the sebaceous (oil) glands, especially in individuals with oily or combination skin. This overproduction of oil often clogs pores, trapping dirt, sweat, and bacteria, leading to acne breakouts. People with acne-prone skin may notice more frequent or severe flare-ups during this season.

Fungal and Bacterial Infections

The damp, moist environment of the monsoon is a breeding ground for fungal and bacterial organisms. Wet clothes, sweat, and tight-fitting garments trap moisture close to the skin, creating ideal conditions for infections such as:

Athlete's Foot: Caused by a fungus, this condition results in itchy, cracked, and peeling skin between the toes.

Ringworm: Identified by circular, scaly patches on the body.

Tinea Capitis: A fungal infection of the scalp that can lead to hair loss and inflammation.

Onychomycosis: A fungal infection affecting the nails, often seen as thickened, brittle, or discolored nails.

Intertrigo: Fungal infections can develop in body folds like the armpits, groin, and under the breasts due to retained sweat and friction.

Skin Allergies

With the arrival of monsoon, there is an increase in airborne allergens such as pollen, mold spores, and dust mites. These can easily trigger allergic reactions in sensitive individuals, causing itchy rashes, redness, and skin irritation. Prolonged exposure to rainwater, which often contains pollutants, can also aggravate these reactions.

Dullness and Uneven Skin Tone

The combination of excessive sweat, clogged pores, and environmental pollutants can rob the skin of its natural glow. Many people experience dullness and uneven skin tone during this season due to the skin's inability to breathe properly. Dehydration, improper cleansing, and irregular exfoliation can worsen this issue.

Eczema Flare-Ups

Humidity can be a trigger for people suffering from eczema. The skin becomes more sensitive, and flare-ups may present as dry, itchy, inflamed patches - often worsened by excessive sweating and friction from wet clothes.

HAIR ISSUES DURING MONSOON

Fungal Infections and Dandruff

A moist scalp becomes an inviting space for fungal infections, leading to persistent dandruff. These scalp infections can inflame hair follicles and result in itching, flaking, and even hair thinning if left untreated.

Increased Hair Fall

Humidity causes hair shafts to absorb water and swell, which weakens the structural integrity of the hair. This makes the hair more susceptible to breakage and shedding. Additionally, the scalp's pH level can get disturbed, further contributing to hair loss.

Frizzy and Limp Hair

Hair naturally absorbs moisture from the atmosphere. During the monsoon, this leads to frizziness, loss of volume, and lack of manageability. Hair becomes limp, dull, and difficult to style.

Weakened Hair Roots

Sweat and constant dampness can weaken the roots of the hair. When hair remains wet or tied up frequently during the monsoon, the hair follicles can become stressed, resulting in hair fall and scalp discomfort.

Product Build-up and Scalp Sensitivity

Using anti-frizz serums or heavy conditioners during this season without thoroughly rinsing can cause product build-up on the scalp. Combined with sweat and humidity, this can clog hair follicles, cause scalp acne, and trigger itching or irritation.

TIPS TO MINIMIZE SKIN AND HAIR ISSUES IN MONSOON

For Skin:

- Use a gentle, pH-balanced cleanser twice daily.
- Keep skin dry and wear breathable, loose-fitting clothes.

- Avoid walking in rainwater whenever possible.
- Use antifungal powders or creams in sweat-prone areas.

For Hair:

- Keep your scalp dry; avoid tying wet hair.
- Shampoo regularly with a mild antifungal or clarifying shampoo.
- Avoid excessive use of styling products.
- Use a microfiber towel to dry hair gently.

The monsoon season may be refreshing for the soul, but it's challenging for your skin and hair. Being aware of how humidity and dampness affect your body can help you take proactive steps to protect yourself. With the right hygiene, skincare, and haircare routine, you can sail through the season without letting the weather dampen your glow.





INFLUENZA - THE MOST COMMON VIRAL INFECTION

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Consultant - Pulmonary Medicine

Influenza, also known to all as flu, is caused by influenza virus. While it is a respiratory disorder, it affects the nose, throat, and sometimes lungs also.

While it is one of the most common contagious respiratory illnesses, the severity is mild in most cases but may require hospitalization in very severe cases. It can also cause death in some cases.

Flu is a seasonal issue and is more common during the cold season and while changing of the season.

While A, B, C, and D are the four types of influenza viruses, A & B are the cause for seasonal flu in humans every year, Type D infects only cattle and type C is not very common and cause only mild respiratory system in humans.

Sudden onset of fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, fatigue, and headaches are commonly witnessed when a person has flu.

Vomiting and diarrhoea are common in children with flu.

Most people who have flu recover in a few days to less than two weeks. But young children, elderly adults, pregnant women, and individuals with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease are at a high risk of developing complications and some could be serious too.

One cannot prevent the spread of influenza, as it is passed through droplets from cough and sneeze of an infected person, or even when they cough with their mouth closed and touch any surface etc.

Since it is highly transmissible when outbreak takes place, one must avoid crowded places like schools, workplace etc. to prevent the spread to others.

Vaccine is one of the best ways to prevent the flu. It is advised that everyone should take a flu shot every year to protect themselves from the virus attack. While the flu shot is not a 100% guaranteed safety from the virus attack, yet it reduces the possibility of one being affected by the virus.

High risk population mentioned above must certainly take the vaccine as this will help them prevent the possibility of severity of flu, hospitalization or even death in some cases.

Good Hygiene practice is another way to reduce the spread of flu. Frequent hand washing with water and soap, covering cough and sneezes with a tissue or in elbow will certainly help prevent the spread by an infected person.

In severe cases antiviral medications are given under medical supervision within first 48 hours of onset to high-risk population and these are not a substitute to vaccine.

So to sum it up, influenza or flu is preventable illness, which can be tackled by vaccines and the severity can be prevented by practicing hygiene methods.





IMPACT OF MONSOON ON CHILDREN AND PREVENTIVE CARE WITH NEWER ADVANCES

DR. JOEL DSOUZA

Specialist - Paediatrics

Monsoon is a season loved by children for its refreshing rains and cooler weather. However, it also brings a rise in infections and illnesses due to increased humidity, stagnant water, and a drop in overall hygiene. Children are especially vulnerable during this season because of their developing immune systems and frequent exposure to unhygienic conditions while playing outdoors.

The most common health issues seen in children during monsoon include respiratory infections (such as colds, flu, and bronchitis), waterborne diseases (like diarrhea, cholera, typhoid, and hepatitis A), and vector-borne diseases (such as dengue, malaria, and chikungunya). Skin infections and fungal rashes are also common due to damp clothes and wet surroundings. These illnesses can lead to missed school days, poor appetite, dehydration, and long-term weakness if not addressed promptly.

Preventive care is key to reducing the burden of monsoon-related illnesses in children:

Hygiene and sanitation: Teach children proper handwashing techniques, especially before eating and after using the toilet.

Safe drinking water: Ensure only boiled or filtered water is consumed to prevent gastrointestinal infections.

Nutritious diet: Boost immunity with a healthy, balanced diet rich in vitamins, fruits, and green leafy vegetables.

Clothing and cleanliness: Dress children in dry, clean clothes and avoid letting them stay in wet garments.

Mosquito control: Use mosquito nets, child-safe repellents, and ensure surroundings are free from stagnant water.



In addition to traditional methods, newer advances in disease prevention have emerged :

Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes: This innovative method involves releasing mosquitoes infected with Wolbachia bacteria that prevent disease transmission like dengue.

Genetically modified mosquitoes: Engineered mosquitoes are now being released in some areas to reduce breeding of disease-spreading species.

Sterile insect technique (SIT): Releasing sterile male mosquitoes limits population growth, reducing disease risk over time.

Vaccines: New vaccines such as Dengvaxia for dengue and Mosquirix for malaria are being introduced in high-risk regions.

Smart mosquito surveillance: AI-based mosquito traps are being used in some cities to track and control mosquito populations more effectively.

By combining conventional precautions with modern advances, parents and caregivers can significantly reduce the impact of monsoon on children's health. Early recognition of symptoms and prompt medical attention can ensure children remain healthy and continue to enjoy the beauty of the rainy season safely.



THE MONSOON DIET DILEMMA: COMFORT FOOD OR COMPROMISE?

MS. ZOHA FATIMA SIDDIQUI

Clinical Dietician

The monsoon season offers cooling breezes and rains, but also presents dietary challenges due to damp conditions. Overindulging in warm, fried, and carbohydrate-rich comfort foods can weaken immunity, cause weight gain, and cause sluggishness.

The Comfort Food Conundrum

During the monsoon season, our bodies crave warm, comforting foods due to the damp weather slowing digestion. These comfort foods, like fried snacks and starchy carbohydrates, provide energy and mood boosts, but overindulging can lead to various health issues.

However, overindulging in these foods can lead to a range of health problems, including:

- **Weight gain:** Frequent intake of calorie-dense foods can lead to obesity and related disorders.
- **Lowered immunity:** High sugar and processed foods reduce the body's ability to fight infections.
- **Sluggishness:** Comfort foods can lead to energy crashes and fatigue.

The Compromise: Balancing Indulgence with Nutrition

So, how can we balance our desire for comfort foods with the need to maintain a healthy diet during the monsoon season, To enjoy the season without compromising health:

- **Choose healthier comfort foods:** Prefer baked steamed or roasted snacks and whole grains like brown rice, quinoa, or whole-wheat bread over refined ones.

- **Incorporate immune-boosting foods:** Foods like citrus fruits, ginger, and garlic have natural immune-boosting properties that can help keep illnesses at bay.
- **Stay hydrated:** Drink ample water and ginger tea, herbal concoctions.
- **Eat mindfully:** Slow, attentive eating prevents overeating.

Monsoon-Friendly Foods & Healthier Comfort Food Alternatives:

Here are some monsoon-friendly foods that can help keep you healthy and energized:

- **Soups:** Warm soups made with vegetables broth with spices like ginger and pepper, beans, and lean proteins can be a comforting and nutritious option.
- **Steamed snacks:** Idli, dhokla, or steamed momos instead of fried pakoras.
- **Stews:** Hearty stews made with whole grains, vegetables, and lean proteins can provide sustained energy and warmth.
- **Roasted vegetables:** Roasted vegetables like sweet potatoes, carrots, and Brussels sprouts can be a delicious and healthy side dish.
- **Herbal teas:** Herbal teas like ginger, tulsi, lemongrass, or cinnamon, peppermint, and chamomile can help soothe and calm the body to boost immunity.
- **Natural sweets:** Jaggery-based sweets, dates, or nuts instead of deep-fried or overly sugary items.

Why We Crave Comfort Foods in Monsoon:

The cold, damp environment during the monsoon can lead to slower digestion, lower immunity, and increased cravings for comfort foods. While indulging occasionally is fine, it's important to choose foods that are both satisfying and supportive of digestion and immunity.

Sluggish digestion: Cold and humidity reduce digestive fire (agni), leading to bloating or discomfort.

Mood boost: Overcast skies lower serotonin levels, making us crave carbs and sweets for quick mood enhancement.

Energy needs: The body requires warmth and energy that is easily digestible.

Risks of Overeating Heavy Foods:

Here are some monsoon-friendly foods that can help keep you healthy and energized:

- **Increased risk of infections (gut and respiratory)**
- **Sluggishness and weight gain**
- **Acidity, indigestion, and bloating**

Tips:

- **Increase intake of vitamin C**
- **Avoid Street food**
- **Warm drink like ginger turmeric concoction for immunity**
- **Increase intake of fruits and probiotics**

Conclusion


The monsoon diet dilemma can be overcome with mindful adjustments to our lifestyle, allowing us to enjoy comforting foods while promoting health and immunity, resulting in a nourishing balance without compromising health.

Stop here for a healthy childhood.



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Paediatricians

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What our patients say about us?

TESTIMONIALS:

Just got discharged from Khar Hinduja Hospital after a small surgery, and I couldn't be more thankful! The nurses were kind, efficient, and helped manage the pain. The housekeeping Maushis and Mamas kept things spotless and made my stay super comfortable. Shoutout to the security team too - always polite and helpful. Overall, a caring, professional team that made a tough time much easier.

-Ritesh Kandhari

Amazing experience in Hinduja for maternity. The nurses on the 8th floor (803) were extremely helpful and guided us throughout the entire process. Service is absolutely amazing and extremely comforting.

-Tapan Fifa

I recently underwent surgery at P. D. Hinduja Hospital, Khar, and I cannot express enough gratitude for the exceptional care I received...The entire medical team, from the assistant doctors to the nurses, staff, and even the moushis-were incredibly supportive and kind...The hospital itself is spotlessly clean with a calm, positive atmosphere that adds to the healing experience. I genuinely felt like I was in good hands every step of the way. Highly recommended for anyone looking for quality care with a human touch.

- Anju Valecha

Exceptional services i was admitted in room no 905A on 09th june25 for my nasal surgery thanks to all the team members before and after the surgery for taking care 24x7 and time to time check up with highly-qualified staff answering all my queries, a heartfull thanks and appreciated for yours great support 🙌 thx P.D.Hinduja and team.

-Lalit Sawant

Hinduja Hospital's tag line "we take over from here" is so reassuring that the patient as well as patient's relatives would forget all about their worries of hospitalisation and treatment. Our experience with Hinduja Hospital was excellent. Doctors, staffs, nurses all gave very good service without giving us any opportunity to complain. Their TPA (third party administration) department is so efficient that you don't have to take much trouble to get your insurance cover for the treatment at Hinduja. Thank you Hinduja.

- Alka Soni

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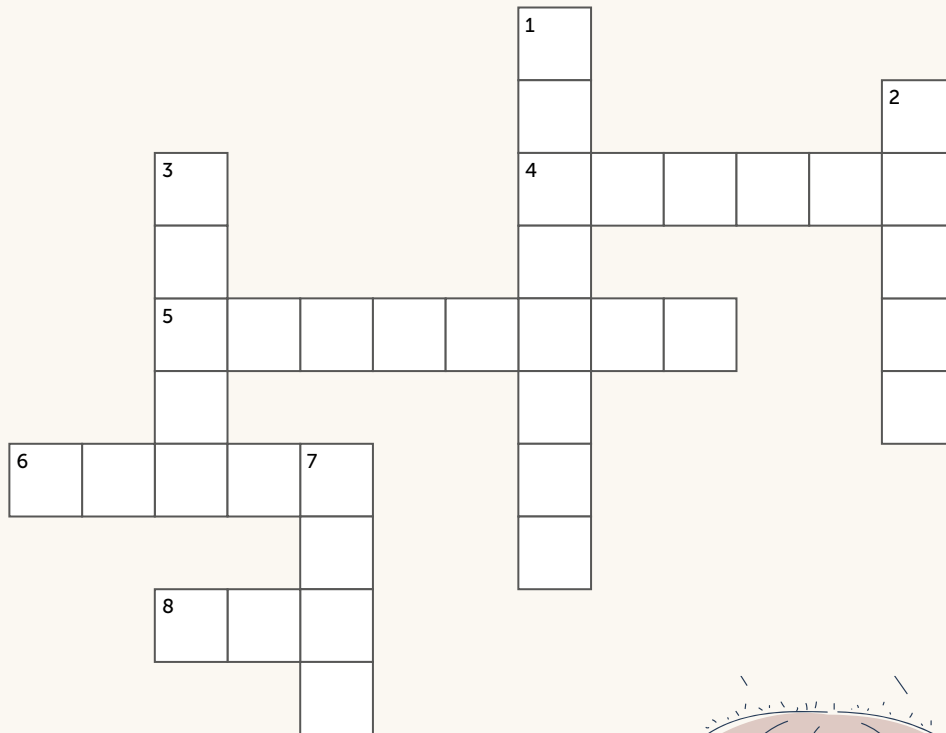
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Monsoon Illnesses



ACROSS

4. This common monsoon illness spreads through mosquito bites. (6 letters)
5. A must-carry item during the rains to stay dry. (8 letters)
6. You need to drink lots of this to stay hydrated. (5 letters)
8. A hot drink that helps soothe a sore throat. (3 letters)

DOWN

1. Don't walk in these—they may carry infections. (6 letters)
2. This spreads quickly in water and causes an upset stomach. (7 letters)
3. You should wash these before eating them. (5 letters)
7. Often muddy and slippery - can cause accidents! (4 letters)



Use the clues to fill in the words above.

Words can go across or down.

Letters are shared when the words intersect.



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