

Difference Between Black, White and Yellow Fungus

In the wake of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been several cases of fungal infections being reported in many states of the country.

Black fungus, White Fungus and Yellow Fungus are different and this article will give more information about the differences between the three fungal infections. Candidates attempting the UPSC Exam this year will find this article useful in the Science and Technology segment of the exam.

What is Black Fungus?

Black fungus is caused by a mould known as 'Mucormycosis'. This mould is present in the surrounding environment. Those who have weak immune systems and suffer from comorbidities like diabetes are especially vulnerable.

Black fungus infections are more widespread in COVID-19 patients because for treatment steroids are used to reduce inflammation in the respiratory tracts. People with cancer or bad kidney function are also vulnerable.

Symptoms for Black Fungus are as follows:

- Swelling on one side of the face
- Severe headache
- Nasal congestion
- Black lesions on the nose or upper side of the mouth
- Chest pain
- Breathlessness
- Difficulty in chewing or opening the mouth

What is Yellow Fungus?

What makes Yellow Fungus different from its black counterpart is that it starts to show internal symptoms before the onset of physical symptoms. Dirty surroundings, food contamination, unsanitary medical equipment/tools are the root cause of this infection.

The similarity that Yellow fungus shares with the Black fungus is that steroids and antibacterial medications are leading to yellow fungus cases while earlier comorbidities such as diabetes are also causing the same types of infections.

The symptoms first start internally, causing pus leakage, organ failure in some cases. Once the infection onsets, patients may experience:

- Lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Redness and sunken eyes
- The onset of white fungus

Overview and Symptoms of White Fungus

White fungus like the black and yellow variants affect those who have diabetes or cancer and if they are using steroids as well. What sets it apart from other infections is that it affects the nail bed, skin, stomach, kidney, brain and reproductive organs.

The most common symptoms are:

- Whitening of tongue
- Cough
- Fever
- Diarrhoea
- Dark spots on the lungs
- Reduced oxygen levels
- Prevention tips for fungal infections

Facts about Black, Yellow and White Fungus

- Black fungus or Mucormycosis can affect the face, nose, eye orbit and even brain. In some cases, it can cause loss of vision too. It can also spread to the lungs.
- White fungus is more dangerous than black fungus because it affects the lungs badly and can also cause damage to other body parts. White fungus can become lethal and may impact the brain, respiratory system, digestive tract.
- According to doctors, COVID-19 patients, diabetics and people on long use of steroids are more at risk of getting infected with black fungus. Some experts claim that prolonged ICU stay can also increase the risk of black fungus.
- People with low immunity are more at risk of getting infected with white fungus. Unsanitary environments containing the moulds make people prone to catching this fungal infection.
- Though it is still not known who is more at risk of White Fungus but some experts said that those who have weak immunity should remain on alert and contact a doctor if they notice any symptoms.