

# Lung diseases & pneumonia on BMC's top-five killer list

Pratibha Masand | TNN

Graphic: Yamini Panchal

**Downward trend in deaths linked to AIDS/HIV**

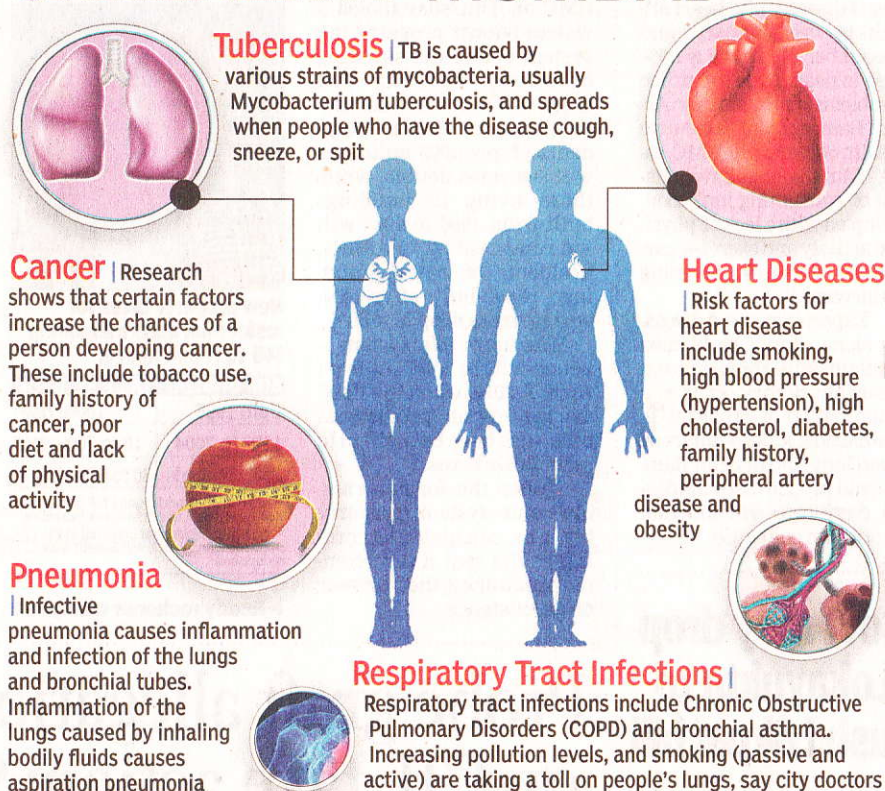
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**Mumbai:** India's success in battling HIV is reflected in Mumbai's report card as well: the city recorded a 29% drop in AIDS-related deaths in 2011 as compared to the previous year. For decades, Mumbai was seen as the HIV/AIDS capital of the nation, but the epidemic seems to be abating, with the mortality rate declining with every passing year. The BMC issued 584 'HIV-AIDS death certificates' in 2011; in 2010 the figure stood at 810.

Experts in the medical community attributed the drop in mortality rate to better Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) facilities, but not all are convinced of the BMC data's accuracy. Dr Alaka Deshpande, former head of the ART Centre at JJ Hospital said: "An HIV positive patient generally dies of other complications such as pulmonary tuberculosis or some other infection. In such a case, only the ultimate cause of death is mentioned in the death certificate. How then, can it be decided that a particular death has been caused by HIV or another infection?" she asked. "But there is no doubt that a patient's longevity is high because of a better ART system in place," Deshpande added.

Dr Harish Pathak, additional project director at Mumbai District AIDS Control Society argued that even with co-infection, the death rate has decreased. "The HIV-TB co-infection is being looked at. But it is the increased awareness among people to get tested and treated along with better care and support services extended from National AIDS Control

## UNHEALTHY MUMBAI



### GET MOVING

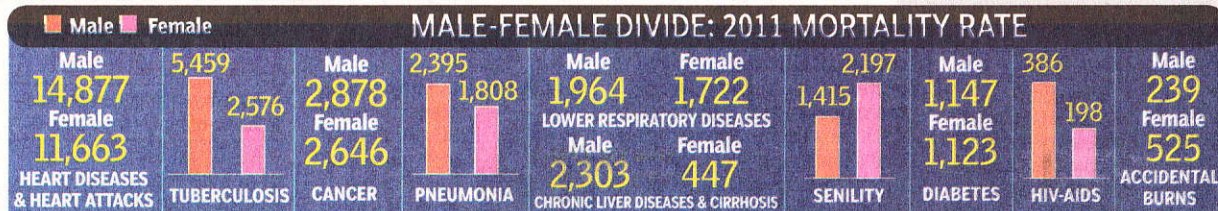
- Walk 3-4 km every day
- Avoid sitting in front of your computer or TV for hours on end
- Avoid smoking
- Avoid sudden and unaccustomed exercises
- Do not ignore signs of cardiac problems
- Go for regular health checkups

### EAT RIGHT

- Eat three meals a day and spread the intake of calories evenly
- Read labels and study the amount calories and fat grams in packaged food
- Use a smaller plate and eat slowly
- Wait half an hour before taking second helpings
- Measure portions

Over the last six weeks, the number of multi drug-resistant TB is twice the number of what had been reported in the past 18 months

**Dr Zarir Udwadia** | HINDUJA HOSPITAL



zures, etc," said Dr Rohit Agarwal, president, Indian Academy of Paediatrics.

Pollution can be attributed as the main cause for deaths due to respiratory infections,

especially COPD. Experts blame suspended particulate matter apart from other pollutants like carbon monoxide. "White blood cells present in the alveoli can eat up these

particles. But when subjected to continuous exposure, the particles get accumulated in the lungs over time. Prolonged accumulation may cause pharynxitis, bronchitis, an

increase in asthma or trigger pneumonia along with the dreaded COPD," said Dr Neelam Rane, professor of physiology at D Y Patil Medical College.

**P**olluted air exacerbated by construction projects, constant change in weather and an unhealthy addiction to cigarettes are taking a toll on our lungs. Pneumonia and lower respiratory diseases like bronchitis have emerged in the BMC's top-five list of killer diseases after cardiac ailments, TB and cancer. A total of 4,203 Mumbaikars lost their lives to pneumonia, and 3,686 patients died of lower respiratory diseases in 2011. The good news is that the death toll for both diseases has dropped since 2010. In 2010, pneumonia claimed 4,666 lives; the mortality rate for lower respiratory diseases stood at 4,372.

Dr Rohini Chowghule from Indian Institute of Environmental Medicine, said pneumonia is an "umbrella term" because a health complication can trigger the infection, which has not one but eight avatars. "One can acquire pneumonia from a community and also from a hospital after surgery (as an infection). There are a number of factors that can cause pneumonia," she said.

Doctors say the 30-45% rise in cases during summer can be attributed to a change in holiday patterns and summer camps where children are in close contact with one another. In India, 4.1 lakh children die annually from pneumonia. "Less than 20% get the necessary antibiotics. If a child suffering from pneumonia is not treated on time, it may cause brain damage, mental retardation, partial paralysis, sei-