Delhi- Free booster doses at govt hospitals soon amid fresh Covid surge

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Precaution Covid-19 vaccine doses will soon be provided free of cost to the eligible population at government hospitals in Delhi, the state government said on Friday.

"Precaution doses of the same vaccine will be given to the people who have revived the first and second doses of the vaccine and who have completed nine months of taking their second dose," read a government statement.

Further, it quoted Delhi health minister Satyendra Jain as saying: "Prevention is better than cure. All those who have not yet taken the vaccine or have taken only the first dose, should be taken to their nearest health facility as soon as possible for complete vaccination."

Currently, those who have completed nine months after the second shot are eligible to take the booster dose, which are available at private vaccination centres.

The Delhi government's move comes as the national capital witnesses an uptick in coronavirus cases and a rise in the positivity rate.

The city saw 366 new Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, which pushed the positivity rate to 3.95%. There has been a rise of nearly 48% in the number of home isolation cases in Delhi in the last week. On Thursday, the number of home isolation cases stood at 574.

In view of this, the government has also advised all hospitals in the national capital have been advised to remain alert.

"The Delhi government is closely monitoring the situation and the government does not want to take any risk. We have completely overhauled our health infrastructure. Along with this, all hospitals have been advised to remain alert amidst increasing cases of corona in Delhi," Jain was quoted as saying by the statement.

He informed that about 37,000 Covid beds and 10,594 Covid ICU beds have been prepared in Delhi.

"If the infection spreads, the government has planned to increase 100 oxygen beds in every ward of Delhi within two weeks. In such a situation, the Delhi government plans to prepare 65,000 beds, so that no person has to face shortage of beds in an emergency situation," read the statement.

Along with specialist doctors, medical students, nurses and paramedical staff have been given special training in Covid management, it said.

It informed that currently, the Delhi government has a capacity of 1363.73 MT of oxygen, including Liquid Medical Oxygen Storage (LMO), Liquid Medical Oxygen Buffer, and PSA Plant.

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Telemetry devices have been installed at all big and small oxygen tanks and this will allow real-time monitoring of oxygen levels and help in supplying oxygen as per the requirements in case of an emergency, it said.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also directed Delhi government hospitals to increase the sanctioned strength of doctors, nurses and paramedics as per the requirement, the statement said.

At the same time, a 24-hour Covid helpline number – 1031 – has been issued to help the infected people during any problem.