

What can you do to prevent catching COVID-19 after vaccination?



As the number of coronavirus cases go down slowly and more and more people getting vaccinated at least with a single jab of the COVID-19 vaccine shot, there's a certain level of reassurance about stepping out outside or carrying on with our activities and be a tad bit safer. However, even with the strongest protective odds offered by vaccines, not only is coronavirus an active threat but still a risk of catching COVID-19 despite being fully vaccinated.

Termed breakthrough infections, or the case wherein a person contracts or develops COVID-19 after vaccination is now a real problem across the world. While there are still not that common amongst those who have been vaccinated, the rise in cases especially in places with high prevalence of Delta variant of the virus is a new cause of worry.

How common are they? And what do we know about them?

Experts have suggested that while breakthrough infections are 'uncommon', there can be a rise in reporting of such cases as we continue to witness higher vaccination numbers, and we'll only be able to gather more data on their severity and risks in the coming months, when we know how truly effective and protective vaccines are.

Now, while it has been certainly established that vaccines aren't a complete 100% preventive of COVID-19, the protection guaranteed by the vaccines leave people who do get breakthrough COVID-19 to only develop 'milder' infections and have less than average risk of being hospitalized or dying from COVID-19, which is why the pros of getting vaccinated weigh over catching the infection by being unvaccinated.

How can you avoid breakthrough cases?

Apart from this, while the medical community continues to study the occurrence of these rare infections, there are certain risk-factors, and measures that can expose someone to getting COVID-19, even after being fully vaccinated. For example, breakthrough infections could be more common amongst those at the frontlines (facing high exposure risks) or those with severe comorbidities (which could leave their immunity weaker and more susceptible to illness). Non-compliance of measures, too, can prove to be costly.

As we mitigate the risks of a potential third wave, we discuss some of the primary preventive measures and safety tips to lessen down the chances of breakthrough infections, if you have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19:

Continue using a mask for a foreseeable while

The rise in post-vaccination cases and the emergence of the Delta variant have brought along a stronger emphasis on the use of masks. While vaccines safeguard you from the severity of disease, good masking hygiene and diligence are some of the ways to actually prevent catching the infection in the first place. Masks should not be stopped, even if you have been fully vaccinated when you are outside since there's still a long way before vaccines reach everyone and no actual way to tell who is vaccinated, and who isn't. Hence, mask hygiene shall be needed to be maintained for a foreseeable future, till the time COVID-19 continues to be an active threat, and guidelines aren't lifted.

As for the type of mask you should be using, the most protective and infection-minimizing ones would be a well-fitted mask (three-layered cloth, surgical or N95) that covers your nose, mouth and under-the-chin area. The mask strings should fit snugly and not facilitate the entry of pathogens. If you use a mask, make sure you disinfect and swap them out frequently.

Pay attention to the place you visit and contagion history

In the post-vaccination world, it's important to pay attention to trivial details regarding the place you are planning to visit and the purpose of your visit. For example, some places might be relatively safer to visit than others, considering COVID-19 risk scenarios. Outside spaces, in comparison to indoor places, are deemed to be less contagious, and there's a lower risk of virus exposure there (since airborne particles cannot linger in empty, open spaces) for long. If you are meeting indoors, it's important to keep a tab on the risk of crowding, space and following of protocols (masks, distancing etc. if there's a mingling of vaccinated and unvaccinated people).

If you are travelling or going for longer distances, it's again relatively important to factor in the case history and possible threat of the virus in a certain place before going there.

Wash hands and disinfect frequently

Something that has been emphasized since the pandemic first started to spread, disinfection is the strongest way to avoid the SARS-COV-2 virus (and other contagious germs) from spreading infections. It's important to disinfect and wash hands after every time you have come in contact with someone, or accessed frequently touched surfaces. If you are outside, carry a sanitizer with you and clean your hands when you can.

Be wary of airborne transmission

Even if you have lower odds of catching the infection, do keep in mind that airborne coronavirus transmission is a big risk factor that can spread COVID-19, and transmit contagious respiratory particles to longer distances. Therefore, this is a risk to keep in mind and there's a strong need to avoid direct contact, and fuel the spread. If you are indoors, make sure the spaces are well-ventilated and there's no space for the virus to collect or linger. Adequate ventilation, good-fitted masks and avoiding crowding are some of the ways you can keep the risk at bay, especially if you do belong to a vulnerable group.

Weigh your risks, and choose a more suitable vaccine, if you have the option

As more vaccines become available to us and the pace of vaccination rises, it's important to note that different vaccines work to offer protection to a different degree, and some vaccines could be safer for use than others if you are at risk. Therefore, if you do have the option to pick and choose (if you are still yet to be vaccinated), do your research well and opt for a more protective vaccine. Newer studies have also highlighted how different vaccines perform in cutting the risks of breakthrough infections as well. In the future, booster shots may also be made available for people at risk, or who may be immunocompromised.

How to handle unemployment stress



With so many people leaving their jobs or being kicked out by organisations, unemployment has become a major cause of stress ever since the pandemic hit the world. Being jobless causes many other issues and the struggle to stay afloat and sane gets real. So does one handle the situation, battle the unemployment stress? Here are some points that you must keep in mind.

Make a list

When you are jobless, you tend to look for any job and grab anything that comes your way no matter what the profile is. To avoid this major blunder, make a list of what all you can do with the skills that you have. Make a plan, list your contacts. And this shall help you clear your mind.

Workout

It is not just about losing weight. Exercising clears your mind and makes you feel a whole lot better. It works on the stress that you have. It boosts your mood and well, you stay fit as well. Do any form of exercise even if it is about an hour of dancing like no one's watching.

Talk to your friends, go out

Do not make the mistake of isolating yourself. Meet a friend for lunch, have a video call with family, or friends. Play games online which are interactive. Resist that urge to step back because that eventually may lead to depression.

Read or go for some activities

By activities, we do not mean investing money because that is something you are short on when jobless. Hunt for something which is inexpensive or free! Try reading! Go to libraries or do some art and craft with what you already have at home. If you have colours at home, paint! Try mandala art. You could even practice music if you have any instrument. If you love singing then do daily riaz! Hone your skills and talent. This is the time.

Sleeping schedule

To avoid slacking, wake up on a scheduled time. So what if you do not have a job? Get ready, have a bath and search for a job. Start a blog. But make sure you have a proper sleep no more than 8 hours.

Healthy diet to keep your children safe from the risk of diabetes



Simple lifestyle changes can help prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. Prevention is even more important if you are at an increased risk due to obesity, high cholesterol or a family history of diabetes. Diabetes is not just common in adults but kids too. For kids, parents can do many things to prevent the condition. You can make it a family affair by inculcating healthy habits. This is because children learn quickly from what they see you doing. Here are some simple steps that you can take:

Stay active

These days, kids are glued to the screen most of the time. Furthermore, the pandemic has reduced their physical activity even more. Go for a walk, play with them, play physical games that they like. Children need at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

Manage weight

If your child is overweight, losing weight can help him reduce the risk of diabetes. Talk with him and make him understand why losing weight is important to maintain his health.

Cut back on sugar

Kids love sugary food. But you have to keep an eye on it and limit their sugar intake. Do not offer them candies, juices and other processed foods.

Offer them healthy snacks

Focus on giving them fruits, whole grains and fruits from an early age. Make sure to introduce one food at a time, so that they can develop a taste for it.

Limit screen time

Too much screen time can lead to eye problems, sleep issues, lesser physical activity.

Eat dinner on time

Eating dinner, in fact, all the meals at the right time is a great way to keep blood sugar in control. Keep television off and avoid any kind of distraction while eating.

