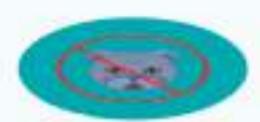
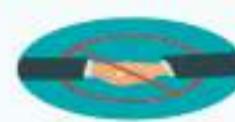


STATETIMES

SUNDAY

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PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19



Coronavirus: Mistakes that are making you prone to COVID-19 complications

The second wave of coronavirus hit us terribly hard, claiming several lives and posing an unprecedented challenge to our healthcare system. Many who survived are still coping with the losses they underwent, while many others continue to battle the long term effects of the virus. Now, with the Omicron scare, the fears of a possible third wave has loomed in, raising alarms across the country. At such a time, when the new variant is extremely infectious and has a high transmissibility rate, dismissing it as 'mild' and letting our guards down is not an option. Having said that, here are some misconceptions and mistakes to avoid if you want to stay safe.

You think you have got infected once and you are safe now

A person who has previously been infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus can certainly expect to have developed a certain level of immunity. However, does that make you invincible and immune to a reinfection? It is highly uncertain.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Preliminary evidence suggests there may be an increased risk of reinfection with Omicron (ie, people who have previously had COVID-19 could become reinfected more easily with Omicron), as compared to other variants of concern, but information is limited."

That said, while scientific evidence in the past has indicated that natural immunity can prevail for 6 months to a year, it is said to be at its peak for around 90 days post-infection and starts to diminish thereafter. If that is the case, neglecting COVID-appropriate behavior just because you think you're less prone to a reinfection can do more damage than you can imagine.

You believe that being fully vaccinated will at max give you a cold or easily manageable symptoms

Getting yourself vaccinated or boosted is of utmost importance. Amid rising COVID-19 cases, being vigilant and taking all necessary steps is crucial. However, if you're already vaccinated and think that you're either immune to infections or will only develop mild symptoms, then you may be under the wrong impression.

Although COVID-19 vaccines have proved to be highly efficacious and clinical trials have backed these claims, breakthrough infections have occurred in the past. This means that fully vaccinated people are still likely to contract the virus, develop symptoms and may even succumb to the virus.

Since Omicron infections have been mild so far, you believe you can let your guard down

As of now, most cases of Omicron infection are said to be mild. Given that people infected with the new variant have reported cold-like symptoms, people believe it can be easily managed and tackled.



However, experts warn against taking the 'variant of concern' lightly. The WHO in a recent update said that the Omicron variant could pose 'very high' risk and overwhelm the healthcare system.

Additionally, health officials have urged people to take all precautionary measures and warned against undermining the new variant just yet. In a tweet, WHO epidemiologist Dr Maria Van Kerkhove said, "While some reports show a reduced risk of hospitalisation of Omicron compared to Delta, there are still far too many people infected, in hospital sick and dying from Omicron (and Delta).

As of now, the UK has reported about 14 deaths due to Omicron, while the US and South Korea have seen one death each. However, it is to note that the deaths occurred mostly in unvaccinated persons.

Dismissing COVID symptoms as common cold

Having headaches, sore throat, cough or a mild fever may all feel like a common cold or a flu infection. But experts urge people to get tested as and when they experience these symptoms.

At a time when COVID-19 cases are escalating, there is no room for negligence. While you may believe you have a winter cold, getting an RT PCR or a rapid antigen test can confirm your results. If in case you test positive, it is best to isolate yourself, at least for 10 days.

You attend gatherings because you believe the worst is over

Being lax in taking precautions is one of the key reasons why India had to battle a devastating COVID wave. Almost two years have passed since the novel coronavirus came into our lives and up until now, it continues to dictate our day to day functions. Just when we thought that the worst was over, another new variant emerged, wreaking more havoc than ever. At such a time of chaos, avoid being negligent and take all preventive measures.

You take masking lightly

Over the course of two years, masks have become an important equipment in our fight against COVID-19. Given that the SARS-CoV-2 virus spreads through contact or when we breathe, talk, cough, or sneeze, covering our faces can not only prevent the contraction of the disease, but also curb spread.

But even though wearing well-fitted masks is a crucial step in preventing the disease, we have begun taking it lightly. People become serious about their actions only when cases rise and infection rates increase, which should not be the case at all.

The pandemic is here to stay, which is why we must take our responsibilities seriously. Only then can we tackle the situation efficiently.

Beware of this Omicron symptom reported in kids under 5



The SARS-CoV-2 virus has affected both adults and children alike. While kids have shown a better and more robust immune response to the virus, they're still very much prone to infection and can develop mild symptoms.

Now, with the emergence of the Omicron variant, health officials are on high alert and have urged people to take all necessary measures. While there is little to no data to confirm if the new variant affects kids more severely, pediatric doctors in the US have recently confirmed the sudden rise in the number of COVID-19 cases among kids. Early on in the pandemic, experts from around the world believed that the majority of COVID-19 cases among kids were either asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic. However, during the second coronavirus wave, the rate of COVID infection in kids was very high. Experts attributed it to the high prevalence rate.

Given that the Omicron variant is highly transmissible and spreads at a much faster pace than the Delta variant, we could possibly see a rise in the number of infections among kids.

While there is no data to suggest that the Omicron variant will be harsh on the kids, it is still important to protect our kids. Considering the majority of children in the country and around the world are yet to be vaccinated, taking preventive steps is the key.

Common symptoms of COVID-19 reported in kids

Akin to adults and older adults, children also experience the various symptoms of COVID-19. Some of them are highly common and prevalent in all age groups. While

fever, fatigue, cough and loss of sense of smell and taste are some of the common symptoms of SARS-CoV-2 infection in kids, a condition called multisystem inflammatory syndrome has often been reported in children. Kids who develop MIS-C condition have come up with severe inflammation in various organs of the body, including heart, lungs, blood vessels, kidneys, digestive system, brain, skin or eyes.

Is Omicron different for kids in terms of symptoms?

As far as the new coronavirus variant, Omicron, is concerned, a recent report suggests that it may lead to a harsh, barking cough called croup in kids under the age of 5. According to doctors, children who contract the Omicron may develop infection in the upper respiratory tract, leading to croup.

That said, croup is a condition that reflects an upper airway infection, which not only blocks breathing but also triggers a distinctive barking sound. Usually, it may be accompanied with fever, hoarseness and laboured or noisy breathing.

What can parents do to ease the symptoms?

Croup is a condition that can be managed at home. Parents can either resort to medications, as prescribed by doctors or adopt home remedies to ease their kid's symptoms.

Make sure that your child sits in an upright position which is comfortable. Ensure that they drink plenty of warm, clear fluids, that could help loosen mucus in the oropharynx. Rest is extremely important.

If your child's symptoms worsen, seek immediate medical attention.

The perfect immunity-boosting kadha to ease cold symptoms and reduce the risk of flu



Maintaining social distancing, wearing a mask and following proper hygiene, are some of the basic things that you need to follow to cut down the risk of viral infection. But along with this, what you eat and drink in a day plays a key role in keeping you healthy and fit. Foods and drinks loaded with nutritious veggies, fruits and spices help to boost immunity and cut down the chances of viral infection.

A strong immune system acts as a barrier for foreign pathogens and prevents the virus from causing serious infection. Boosting immunity is specifically crucial at the current time when we are dealing with the double threat in the form of omicron variant and flu.

Drinking kadhas for boosting immunity

Taking to her Instagram handle, Nutritionist Jhanvi Kanakia Sanghvi recently shared a post in which she shows how to make an extremely healthy kadha for boosting immunity. Kadhas, which are healthy concoctions made from spices and herbs, have great importance in Ayurveda, the traditional Indian medicinal practice. They are prepared from natural ingredients and hardly have any side effects. Here is how you can make Jhanvi's immunity-boosting kadha.

Ingredients

1-inch fresh ginger
1-2 pieces of jaggery
Few pieces of black peppercorns
A pinch or two of ajwain seeds
3-4 small sticks of cinnamon
1-2 star anise
5-6 pieces of cloves
1-2 pieces black cardamom (badi elaichi)

1 teaspoon of homemade chai masala

How to make this special kadha

Take 2 glasses of water in a deep pan and put it on the stove for boiling. Add grated ginger and other ingredients to it. Leave the concoction to boil for 7 to 10 minutes till the water turns dark. Strain the drink in a cup and serve it hot. Remember the quantity of ingredients mentioned above is for preparing two small cups of kadhas. Add more ingredients to prepare a large quantity.

How this drink helps

Spices like black pepper, carom seeds, cloves, star anise and cardamom have anti-inflammatory and antibacterial compounds that can help in soothing sore throat, cold and cough. Several studies have proven that including spices in the diet can help to improve your health in more than one way. It can also strengthen your immunity and fight free radicals, which damage your cells and can lead to disease.

Furthermore, ginger belongs to the herb family and has strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. Increasing the intake of ginger in the diet can combat inflammation and keep your immune system healthy. Last but not least, adding jaggery to this drink can enhance the taste of your kadha and also cleanse your respiratory system. It detoxifies your body and fights cold and flu.

When and how much kadha you must have

Kadhas are indeed healthy but should be consumed in limitation. Drinking too much kadha in a day can lead to acidity, heartburn and constipation. In a day, stick to two cups of kadhas. You can replace your kadha with your daily cup of tea or coffee. For best results have the concoction in the morning and the evening.