

STATE TIMES

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Your Companion for a Funday



PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19



Coronavirus: Have COVID-19 symptoms but testing negative?

The SARS-CoV-2 virus is a respiratory illness that could affect both our upper and lower respiratory tract. It could cause symptoms ranging from a fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, runny nose and body pain to severe symptoms including shortness of breath, chest pain, breathlessness and low blood oxygen levels in the body. Having one or more such symptoms could indicate COVID-19, especially if we were witnessing a surge in coronavirus cases. But now that we're past the Omicron-driven wave and cases are plummeting, do our symptoms really mean COVID? What could getting a negative test even when a person is sick actually mean? Let us try and find out.

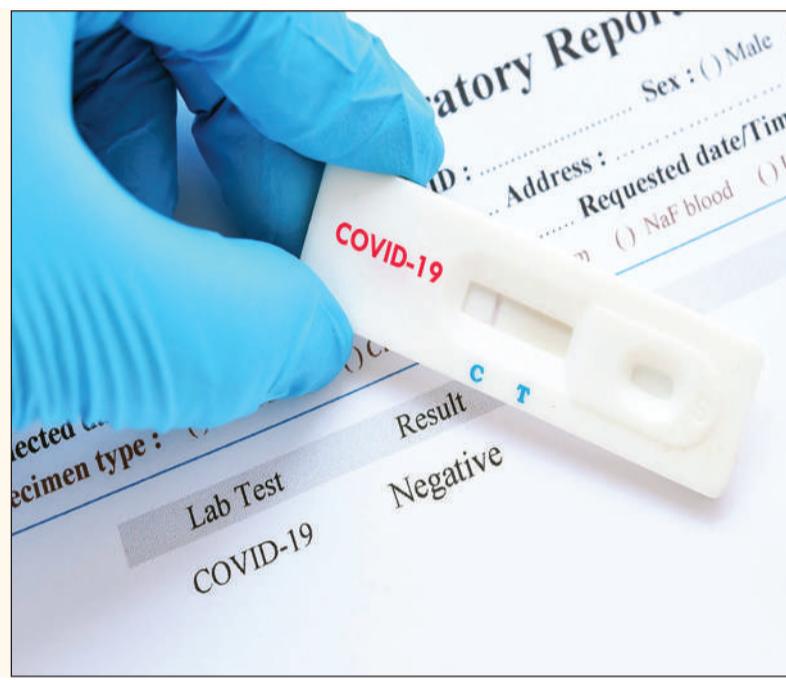
False negative could be a possibility

There could be many reasons behind a negative test result even when you are down with COVID symptoms. Firstly, it depends on the type of test you get. You could either get a rapid antigen test or an RT PCR test. But comparatively, a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test is said to be the gold standard for detecting the presence of the coronavirus in the body. While a rapid test delivers prompt results and is still efficient in detecting COVID-19, a PCR testing cuts down the chances of false negatives.

However, false negatives with RT PCR testing is still a possibility. If the samples from the patient are not collected properly, it could hamper with the accuracy. Additionally, if the virus is still in its early stage of replication or if the person has a low viral load in the body, it could result in a false negative even when they are showing all the symptoms of coronavirus.

Do new COVID variants have anything to do with it?

While there is no solid evidence to prove that COVID variants can dodge testing and tracking, experts have said that the new Stealth Omicron, which is the BA.2



sub-lineage of the Original Omicron variant, lacks a key mutation in the spike protein that helps it avoid detection.

Scientists suggest that unlike COVID's Omicron variant that contains a genetic change known as a deletion in the "S" (spike) gene, which allows the healthcare providers to detect the variant, the stealth or BA.2 subvariant lacks this S gene drop out making it difficult to track. This is also one of the reasons why the new substrain is being termed as the "stealth".

However, much remains under speculation and more research is being conducted to understand the functions of the BA.2 subvariant.

Some COVID symptoms could resemble other respiratory illnesses

Another reason why you're getting a negative test result even when you have COVID symptoms is that it could probably be something other than the coronavirus illness.

Over two years have passed by since COVID-19 impacted our lives. But before this deadly disease invaded our lives, we were still battling other respiratory illnesses like the flu or a common cold. That said, other than the SARS-CoV-2 virus, there are other viruses that are as contagious as the deadly virus and can lead to symptoms that may resemble the COVID-19.

What should you keep in mind

Although you may test negative for COVID, if you have symptoms, you must continue isolating yourself from the others. Stay home, wear your masks, rest until you feel better. Continue monitoring your symptoms and if your condition worsens, seek medical help immediately. It is important to understand that other respiratory illnesses can also spread and severely impact those who are vulnerable and have pre-existing medical conditions.

How parents can bully-proof their children

One of the most overlooked problems among children in our society is bullying, which can happen in-person or on the internet (cyberbullying). Bullying is a repeated action of intentionally humiliating and/or harming people mentally and physically. It may include physical aggression like hitting, kicking, slapping or verbal abuses involving threats, resorting to blackmail in order to intimidate people or making remarks that take a toll on a person's confidence.

Every child is prone to bullying. But there are ways we can prevent it. Here are some things parents can do to bully-proof their kids and make them flourish.

Help build your child's confidence and self-esteem

Those who may have witnessed or experienced bullying will know that a bully preys on people who they think are either weak or not equipped to stand up against them, which is why boosting your child's confidence is the key to helping them fight against bullies.

Encourage your child to participate in various activities, make them feel confident about themselves, boost their spirits by praising the good they do and let them know that you have their backs at all times.

Be an involved parent

When it comes to children, parents must show a genuine interest in their lives. Kids may not be vocal when they feel neglected, but they will surely distance themselves away from you if they feel overlooked. They may find it difficult to confide in you, which can further complicate things, especially if they're being bullied. Because they choose to keep secrets from you, their bully may take advantage and thrive on it, while your child suffers in silence.

Educate them about bullying

In order to prevent bullying, your child must first understand what it is. Teach them what bullying means, what it constitutes of, why it is dangerous and how it can



impact them in the long run. Help them understand why bullying or being bullied is not right.

Let them know if they're being bullied, it's not their fault and encourage them to stand up against it. Also, educate them about cyberbullying, which has become so prevalent in recent times.

Encourage them to share, build a safe space

Most importantly, it is crucial that parents build a safe, positive space for their children to share their deepest darkest secrets. Until and unless they feel comfortable talking to you, they confide in you, it is impossible for them to open up to you. That said, always urge them to have strong opinions, to put forward their points and to not cave in to bullies.

Signs your child is being bullied

In order to find out if your child is a victim of bullying, here are some signs and symptoms to watch out for.

Emotional and behavioural signs may include:

- Extreme mood swings
- Staying isolated
- Changes in sleep and eating patterns
- Increased sibling fights
- Aggressive behaviour
- Being withdrawn
- Getting poor grades in school

Physical signs may include:

- Unexplained bruise marks, cuts and scratches on the body
- Returns home with missing or damaged belongings
- Frequent headaches or stomach pain

These Lifestyle Changes Can Delay Ageing By 10 Years



A long and healthy life filled with love, laughter and happiness: the heart wants nothing more than that. Given a chance we all would like to add more healthy years to our lives. While it is hard to predict how long one would live, one can surely increase longevity by making some simple tweaks in the lifestyle. Nutritionist Dr Amy Shah recently took to her Instagram handle to share few tips that can help one live longer. These tweaks can be included by everyone in their routine, but are especially beneficial for those in their 20s and 30s. Here are some things you can do to live a longer life.

Add real food to the diet

The nutritionist recommends adding more nutritious and real food in the diet. She asked to add more of three types of foods - legumes, whole grains and nuts daily to the diet. These food groups are loaded with nutrients and can help your internal organs function well. Nutrients present in these food groups can cut down the risk of chronic diseases and increase your longevity.

Decrease consumption of red meat

Cut down the intake of red meat and processed foods. Limiting the intake of red and processed meat to less than five servings a week. Red meat is loaded with cholesterol and unhealthy fat and its excessive intake would only pave the way for heart-related issues, but can increase the risk of bowel and stomach cancer.

Get more natural light

Sunlight is not only the greatest source of vitamin D it also helps to reduce stress and improve your mood. For all these reasons it is important to soak in the sun for a few hours every day. Vitamin D deficiency is quite common among people. It is a nutrient required to regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body and maintain bone health. Sitting even for half an hour in the Sun can benefit you in many ways.

Fasting for 13 hours or more overnight

Try to fast for 13 hours or more overnight. Fasting is the current rage and its pop-

ularity is driven by many factors. Overnight fasting gives a chance to your organs to focus on the healing process, rather than digestion. It helps to heal the organs so that they can function well. It can reduce the risk of developing chronic illness, thus adding years to your life.

Walking 10,000 steps a day

Staying physically active is as essential as eating healthy or making other tweaks to your lifestyle. Even if you do not like gymming or other intense workouts, walking 10,000 steps a day can also help to keep you fit and active. Try to walk for at least 10,000 steps daily.

Find ways to de-stress

Personal and professional events related to stress can take a toll on your health and well-being. Plan some activities in a day to de-stress and calm your mind. Whether you choose to read, walk in nature or meditate, try to follow it daily to calm your mind and recharge yourself.

