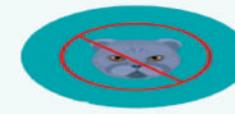


STATETIMES

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Coronavirus: Reasons people are resisting booster doses

A COVID-19 booster shot is an additional dose of a vaccine recommended after the protection provided by the original shots starts waning down. The booster helps you to maintain a strong protection from severe coronavirus infection. It is also called as a precautionary dose in India and can be administered nine months after the second dose. Booster shots aren't new and not just limited to COVID-19 vaccines. They are given for many other vaccines for children and adults.

Amid new emerging variants, YouGov's latest survey reveals if urban Indians are willing to get a Covid-19 booster dose or not. The data for this survey was collected online among 1013 urban respondents in India by YouGov's Omnibus between June 14th and 17th, 2022 using YouGov's panel.

Among those who have taken both the doses of the vaccine, a higher proportion (74%) show willingness to take the booster dose without hesitation. Close to one in five (18%) are reluctant to take an additional shot while one in ten remain unsure of their decision (9%).

The survey found that vaccine hesitancy appears to be higher in tier 2 and 3 cities as compared to tier 1 cities. Here are the top reasons behind people's reluctance to get the booster dose.

Confidence in first two doses

A majority (64% of respondents) feel confident that the first two doses of the vaccine are enough which is why they are reluctant to get the precautionary dose. However, the effectiveness of vaccination can go weak with time.

Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla also said that two doses of the company's vaccine may not provide strong protection against infection from the COVID omicron variant, and to be able to prevent hospitalization.

Afraid of short-term side-effects

Close to one in five (19%) people in the survey shared that they are scared of the short-term side-effects of the booster dose. These temporary symptoms are similar



to those you might notice when you get a flu shot, such as a sore arm, fever, body aches, headaches and tiredness for a day or two. While it is natural to fear these symptoms, they do not mean that you are sick. Rather, it is a signal that your immune system is responding to the booster shot and building up protection against COVID-19.

Long-term side effects

17% of the respondents in the survey are worried about the alleged long-term side effects of the vaccines. Researchers have found that there are a few rare but severe side effects from COVID-19 vaccination. These include thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome which is a condition in which a person experiences blood clotting as well as low platelet count; Guillain-Barré syndrome in which the immune system attacks the peripheral nervous system; and Myocarditis which is an inflammation of the heart.

Doubts regarding booster's effectiveness

Some people in urban India (15% of the respondents) are doubtful about the effectiveness of the booster dose. However, as per experts, the COVID-19 booster dose is quite effective against the XE variant of the virus. A June 2022 study published in The Lancet Journal also found that booster mRNA vaccine-doses were moderately effective in preventing infection with the omicron variant for over a month after administration.

Choice

13% of the respondents said they had to take the first dose out of compulsion such as for travel, etc., but will now resist taking a booster dose. Apart from these categories, when asked whether booster doses should be made compulsory by the government, 76% of the people responded that they would like it to be mandated. Most of these respondents (90%) were those who said that they would take the booster dose without hesitation.

Monsoon illnesses to safeguard your child from; how to prevent them

Monsoons are around the corner and we're all expecting some respite from the heat! However, with monsoons, there is always an increased danger of various illnesses. Especially when it comes to kids, parents must be extremely vigilant. Not only do the rains welcome a host of diseases and infections, but it also creates an environment where the viruses thrive. The humidity and high moisture content in the air becomes a breeding ground for the microorganisms that cause illnesses.

Some of the common illnesses to beware of in the monsoons are as follows:

Common cold and flu

The rainy season gives light to a number of airborne diseases including common cold and the flu infection.

While a common cold occurs due to a sudden change in the temperatures, in people with a weak immune system, flu or the influenza spreads from one person to another through aerosol droplets in the air.

Symptoms include a mild fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, fatigue, body pain and in some cases gastrointestinal issues.

Vector-borne diseases

There are several vector-borne or mosquito-related illnesses that arise during the monsoons. Malaria, dengue and chikungunya are some of the most common mosquito-borne illnesses. Those suffering from these illnesses may develop debilitating symptoms including high fever, extreme body pain, rashes, vomiting, joint pain, fatigue and abdominal cramps.

In most cases of vector-borne illnesses, medical attention is crucial. Keeping hydrated, eating nutrient-dense foods, and rest are some of the things that help treat the illnesses.

Food and water-borne illnesses

Food- and water-borne diseases such as typhoid, cholera, leptospirosis and jaundice are common during the rainy seasons. These occur due to poor sanitation and consumption of contaminated foods and water. Such illnesses can lead to wide-ranging symptoms including fever, headache, joint pain, diarrhoea and abdominal cramps.

Hepatitis A is a viral infection that can also spread from contaminated food and water. It can cause inflammation in the liver and lead to symptoms like fatigue, fever,



tenderness in the stomach, yellow eyes, dark-coloured urine, and a sudden loss in appetite.

Fungal infections

Given that the monsoons raise humidity and moisture in the air, it gives light to several fungal infections. The damp conditions make it a perfect host for various fungi, promoting their growth. That said, fungal infections become extremely common during the rainy season.

Some of the common infections include the athlete's foot, which is a contagious fungal infection affecting skin on the feet and can spread to the toenails and sometimes the hands.

Ringworms are also common occurrences characterized by round, scaly, crusted patches on the skin.

Fungal nail infections can also occur affecting the fingernails or toenails.

All these fungal conditions can be prevented by maintaining good hygiene. Make sure your child avoids wearing damp clothes and keeps their feet and body clean and dry.

Do not let them share items such as towels, clothes and shoes with their friends or others. Ensure they wear dry and loose-fitted clothing.

What parents can do to protect kids

During monsoons, parents must take extra caution. While letting your child enjoy the rains and make memories is of utmost importance, it is as important to build their immune system and take preventive measures.

A healthy diet plays a significant role. Make sure your child's diet involves green wholesome veggies, fresh fruits, milk, eggs, and nuts. Ensure that they stay hydrated throughout the day. Do not let them feast too much on spicy, sugary and processed foods.

Other than that, help them maintain good hygiene. Make sure they wash their hands frequently, especially when they touch potentially contaminated surfaces or use a restroom.

If your child gets wet in the rain, immediately change their clothes and keep them dry and warm. With mosquitoes buzzing around, dress your children with full-sleeved clothing.

Use good Mosquito Repellents

The pet parents' guide to monsoon-care for Dogs

The monsoon brings with it that much-needed respite from the soaring temperatures including the pollutants all around. This makes it perfect for pet parents all over the country to spend more time outdoors with their energetic furballs. However, despite all the positive elements of the rains, there is also a flip side to it. Pets, especially dogs, are a lot more susceptible to dyspepsia, skin infections, and other illnesses. Hence, you must take extra care to keep your pooch clean and healthy throughout the wet monsoons. Here are 8 tips for pet parents to make sure your furry friend stays happy and healthy.

Keep your pet's fur dry and use appropriate rain gear as needed

Before and after daily walks and outdoor playtime, pat dry your dog's fur with a towel. There is a high amount of moisture in the atmosphere during the rainy season, making it imperative to keep your dog's fur as dry as possible to combat its negative effects, and prevent any bacterial and fungal skin problems. Powders with antifungal properties can help prevent fungal infections on the paws and other areas. You'll also need to temporarily switch to a waterless shampoo for dogs. A doggie raincoat is also a great way to protect them while also letting them enjoy the downpour outside.

Cover those paws

Since your dog's paws are almost constantly touching the ground, they are exposed to dirt and pathogen-causing germs, viruses, and other microorganisms. Shoes or boots designed for dogs can help shield their paws, but if your dog dislikes wearing doggie shoes, make sure to thoroughly clean their paws with warm water and a towel after every walk.

Provide a fiber-rich diet

If your pooch is unable to get their long walks and fill of outdoor activities due to the persistent rains, fiber-rich fruits and vegetables will help with good digestion and regular bowel movements. Exercises performed indoors might make up for a lack of outside playtime. You can also exercise your dog within your home by running up and down the stairs or playing fetch with them. To prevent problems like obesity, the daily food intake for your dog must also be proportionate to the level of activity.

Offer purified or boiled water



Make sure to only give purified or boiled and cooled water to your dog, to drink. This will help avoid any water-borne infections or stomach issues from developing.

Keep their ears clean and be wary of infections

During the monsoon season, your dog's ears become very moist. To prevent ear infections, it's crucial to keep their ears dry and remove any wax build-up regularly. After every outdoor play session and bath, dry their ears, especially for dogs with ears that are long and flappy.

Provide a safe resting area

Most animals, including dogs, are very afraid of the sound of loud thunder. Hence, your pet must have their own private and secure resting area in the house. When the thunder frightens them, they can run to this area to feel safe. A dog often feels secure hiding under the bed of their owner, so leave your bedroom door open for them to retreat to when terrified or anxious.

Prevent tick and flea attacks

Insects like ticks and fleas become more active in warm, humid weather, and these bothersome parasites can expose the dog to a range of dangerous diseases. So, it's crucial to keep your dog's resting area tidy and clear of insects like ticks, fleas, and mosquitoes. Their bedding needs to be dry and should be replaced frequently. Some preventative strategies include using anti-tick shampoos and collars on pets. Additionally, tick powders and sprays are also excellent at killing and deterring these pests.

Deworm your pet and vaccinate them before the start of the rainy season

The risk of respiratory infections and worm-related illnesses increases during the monsoon season. Always consult your trusted veterinarian to make sure your pets receive the appropriate deworming tablets and vaccines, if any, based on their specific immunisation schedules.

These quick tips and tricks can help ensure that your dog is properly equipped to take on the monsoons, to the best of their ability. If necessary, you can also schedule an appointment with an experienced and certified veterinarian from DCC Animal Hospital to make sure your pets remain content, healthy, and strong, regardless of whatever challenges the weather may bring.

(The article has been written by Dr. Vinod Sharma
Head of Veterinary Services at DCC Animal Hospital).

