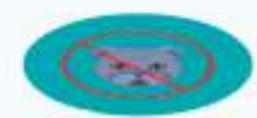# SUNDAY

Your Companion for a Funday

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19

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 precedence of Delta variant of the virus is a new cause of worry.

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 ills). 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 sanitiser 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.

Learn to be happy alone

Some people love to spend time with themselves, while for others it is the most dreadful task. They dislike every moment they have to spend at home alone and often look for ways to avoid such situations. This problem is more common in extroverts and compared to introverts. Extroverts are quite social and love being surrounded by people. So, for them living alone is the most challenging task of all.

Being alone does not mean that you are lonely. Regardless of what your opinion is about being alone, it is actually a healthy practice. It is an opportunity to get to know yourself better, improve your mental health, and build a good relationship with yourself. Here we will tell you 7 ways to be happy alone.

Learn something new

Most people hate being alone because they do not know what to do in their free time. The best way to spend your time is by engaging in some new activity or practising some hobby. Whether it is reading, painting or dancing. Make time for things that you love and enjoy. This will help you to connect with yourself in a better way.

Avoid comparing yourself

One of the reasons for unhappiness is comparison. Stalking your friends and family members on social media and comparing your life with theirs will only lead to disappointment.

You need to remember that every individual is different and they have different battles to fight. Posting happy pictures on social media does not mean that they are really happy. Try not to measure your happiness with them.

Take a break from social media

Social media has proven to be a boon at the current time. It has actually made the world smaller where you can connect with people sitting in the other continent just with the click of a button.

But this also gives rise to anxiety and stress levels among people. If you intend to stay happy and spend some quality time with yourself, take a break from social media from time to time.

Pamper yourself

While juggling with our busy life we hardly find time for ourselves. Giving time to yourself and pampering yourself can help to relax and rejuvenate. Go for a spa session or have a hearty morning breakfast in your favourite restaurant. Taking breaks from time to time from your schedule is one of the best ways to stay happy.

Stay active

We often underestimate the importance of regular exercise, but it is one of the important activities that help you stay happy as well as healthy. Exercising helps to release endorphins, neurotransmitters in your brain that can make you feel happier. Even if you do not engage in a formal exercising routine, staying physically active throughout the day can help you gain confidence.

Spend some time with nature

This may sound very typical, but spending some time with nature is one of the best ways to stay happy. Whether you prefer to take a walk in the park or take a long ride on your cycle, any activity that brings you close to nature is good for you. Spending some time with nature helps to improve symptoms of depression and lower blood pressure.

Acknowledge things you are grateful for

Studies suggest that expressing gratitude can boost happiness and hopefulness. Dedicate some time to prepare a list of things that you truly appreciate and are thankful for in your life. Make a diary and daily pen down the things you are grateful for. Whenever you feel low, have a look at the list and remind yourself of everything you have.

Ways you can raise a successful child without overparenting

Every parent wants their kid to be independent, successful and intelligent. But how many of us really know how to do it with the right balance? When a parent goes over and beyond to drive his/her child to success, spoon feeding them through every milestone, then they're likely to raise a dependent kid. On the contrary, a parent who believes in disciplining his/her child by setting rules and resorting to punishment, is more likely to raise an under-confident, low on self esteem kid.

That said, both of these measures can prove ineffective. If you're someone who wants to raise successful kids, but still wants to maintain a balanced relationship with your child, here's how you can do it.

Guide them, but let them take control

A parent's job is to guide their children through every thick and thin. But spoon feeding them at every step of the way can take a negative turn. That said, while it is great to give them a boost every now and then, you must let them take control of every situation. Assist them in making decisions but do not overshadow their choices.

Don't just raise happy kids, focus on making them responsible

All parents want their kids to be happy. But should happiness be your only goal? I think not. Raising a moral, ethical and a responsible kid should also be a priority. If you only believe in raising a happy kid, you will only think of ways to shield them and protect them from dangers. But if you want to raise a successful kid, you'll need them to get their hands dirty at some point. Without having any experience or knowledge about a difficult situation, they're most likely to falter in the future. That said, let them be responsible for their actions.

Make sure they help you with chores without being asked

While education is of utmost importance, your kid should also be efficient in helping around the house. You can start with having them assist you initially, but over time, make them keen enough to help you without any requests. Make them instinctive and let them realize their duties without being asked to do it.

Say 'Yes' to communication and avoid punishments

Talking to your child, communicating with them is one way you can understand your child's needs. Rather than adhering to punishments, hear them out, guide them and let them express themselves efficiently. Make them address their queries every step of the way, so they know if they're going in the right direction or the wrong.