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Healthcare with Compassion

What to Expect Before, During and After COVID-19 Vaccination

Overview

Two vaccines were approved to prevent COVID-19 in India by the DGCI — **COVAXIN** and **Covishield**.

1. **COVAXIN**: The first vaccine for COVID-19 in India that was developed in partnership with the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research)

2. **Covishield**: Developed by the University of Oxford, along with AstraZeneca and manufactured by Serum Institute of India for Indian residents

Right now, both the vaccines are being rolled out mainly to healthcare and frontline workers, individuals over 50 years, and high-risk patients (people below 50 years with comorbid conditions).

Currently, getting a COVID-19 vaccine is at the top of everybody's minds. Therefore, it is normal for most of us to have questions about the process, especially what to expect before, during and after COVID-19 Vaccination at some point in the future. Here's what you have to know, if you wish to be prepared for what is to come.

How to register for getting COVID Vaccination?

Registration opened at 9:00 am on 1st March-2021 for people aged above 60 years and those above 45 years of age with comorbidities. You can access the portal through the link: https://www.cowin.gov.in/

COVID Vaccine registration process for senior citizen (for 60 plus):

1. Use Co-Win app, Aarogya Setu app or log on to https://www.cowin.gov.in
2. Enter your mobile number
3. Get an OTP to create your account
4. Fill in your name, age, gender and upload a photo identity document (Aadhar Card, Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC), Passport, Driving License, PAN Card, NPR Smart Card, Pension Document with a photograph)
5. Choose a date and a COVID vaccination centre
6. An acknowledgement (registration slip or token) will be sent to you on his registered mobile number – Facility for downloading and printing etc. will also be available
7. Up to 4 appointments can be made by one mobile number

There are other options available for senior citizens who are not tech-savvy

- **Option 1:** They can go to a COVID vaccination centre and get themselves registered
- **Option 2**: They can also call 1507 to avail the same

Who are now eligible for COVID Vaccine?

Everyone above 60 years of age and those over 45 years with comorbidities are eligible. However, to expand the coverage of vaccinations and scale up the fight against COVID-19, the Government of India has decided to open the vaccination drive for everyone above the age of 45 years starting from April 1.

After April 1, 2021, anyone who is above 45 years can get the vaccination. There will be no need for medical certificates as evidence of co-morbidity conditions, as the government had specified earlier for the second phase of vaccination.

For 45 plus with comorbidities:

1. Use Co-Win app, Aarogya Setu app or log on to https://www.cowin.gov.in
2. Enter your mobile number
3. Get an OTP to create your account
4. Fill in your name, age, gender and upload a photo identity document (Aadhar Card, Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC), Passport, Driving License, PAN Card, NPR Smart Card)
5. Upload comorbidity certificate signed by your doctor as a comorbidity proof
6. Choose date and a COVID vaccination centre
7. An acknowledgement (registration slip or token) will be sent to you on his registered mobile number – Facility for downloading and printing etc. will also be available
8. Up to 4 appointments can be made by one mobile number

Note: There will be only one live appointment for a beneficiary at any point of time for each dose. Appointments for any date for a COVID Vaccination Center will be closed at 3:00 pm on the same day for which the slots were opened. For example, if you have booked on 1st March, the slots will be open from 9:00 am till 3:00 pm on 1st March, and the appointments can be booked anytime before that, subject to availability. However, an appointment can also be booked on 1st March for any future date for vaccination.

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For more details, check the user guide created by the Government of India for the citizen registration and appointment: https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/UserManualCitizenRegistration&AppointmentforVaccination.pdf

What are the specified comorbidities for the COVID vaccine's eligibility to citizens in the age group 45 – 59 years?

People who are 45 plus and have comorbidities will be able to get a vaccine against COVID-19 at a government centre or a private hospital from March 1 2021.

As per the latest updates from the Government of India, people with one or more of the following co-morbidities, will be given priority in this phase of vaccination:

Sl.No.	Criterion
1	Heart Failure with hospital admission in the past one year
2	Post Cardiac Transplant/Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD)
3	Significant Left ventricular systolic dysfunction (LVEF <40%)
4	Moderate or Severe Valvular Heart Disease
5	Congenital heart disease with severe PAH or Idiopathic PAH
6	Coronary Artery Disease with past CABG/PTCA/MI and Hypertension/Diabetes on treatment
7	Angina and Hypertension/Diabetes on treatment

8	CT/MRI documented stroke and Hypertension/Diabetes on treatment
9	Pulmonary artery hypertension and Hypertension/ Diabetes on treatment
10	Diabetes (less than 10 years OR with complications) and Hypertension on treatment
11	Kidney/ Liver/ Hematopoietic stem cell transplant: Recipient OR on wait-list
12	End-Stage Kidney Disease on haemodialysis/CAPD
13	Current prolonged use of oral corticosteroids/ immunosuppressant medications
14	Decompensated cirrhosis
15	Severe respiratory disease with hospitalizations in last two years/FEV1 <50%
16	Lymphoma/ Leukaemia/ Myeloma
17	Diagnosis of any solid cancer on or after July 1 2020 OR currently on any cancer therapy
18	Sickle Cell Disease/ Bone marrow failure/ Aplastic Anemia/ Thalassemia Major
19	Primary Immunodeficiency Diseases/ HIV infection
20	People with disabilities due to Intellectual disabilities/ Muscular Dystrophy/Acid attack with the involvement of respiratory system/ People with disabilities having high support needs/ Multiple disabilities including deaf-blindness

Kindly contact your doctor if you are **pregnant** and are **obese with a BMI of 40kg/m2** to discuss if you are eligible for COVID vaccination.

Is it mandatory to take the COVID vaccine?

While the COVID 19 vaccination is absolutely voluntary and not mandatory, it is strongly advisable as it contributes to the breaking of the infection chain. Vaccination is absolutely essential for your own health and the health of your loved ones like family, friends, relatives, co-workers, and everyone you are physically in contact with.

Also, a COVID recovered person should not be in for dilemma to get COVID vaccination as it is strongly recommended for everyone regardless of prior infections, recovery and virus history.

Can the COVID-19 vaccine affect my body during any medical procedure?

The DCGI (Drug Controller General of India) has approved two vaccines for emergency use – Covishied, developed by the Serum Institute of India (SII), and Covaxin, produced by Bharat Biotech. Both vaccines are considered safe for those with a history of, or those undergoing medical procedure unless they have a contraindication to any kind of vaccination.

Make sure you consult a doctor and inform them about any medical conditions you may have. Share your medical history, allergies to certain medication, and also medical procedures you may have undergone or are undergoing before taking the vaccine. Experts advise you to follow the safety measure like wearing a mask or maintaining social distancing even after getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

Will a person be admitted to a hospital after getting the vaccine?

No. You may not need hospitalisation after getting COVID-19 vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines are approved by the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) only after proven safety and efficacy. While COVID-19 vaccines have some normal side effects like:

- Mild fever
- Swelling
- Headache
- Nausea and dizziness
- Pain and discomfort

You might not need hospitalisation for mild side effects. However, you may need admission in case of severe side effects which include severe allergic reactions, any uncommon infection, seizures or any unexpected side effects. If you experience any of these symptoms, you must immediately report to your doctor so that they can act on it quickly.

Overall, COVID-19 vaccines are safe, and any severe side effects are rare, so it is safe to get vaccinated and protect yourself from the coronavirus.

Should a person who has received the COVID-19 vaccine undergo quarantine?

As per the recent updated guidelines of the CDC (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention), a person fully vaccinated probably does not need quarantine if exposed to COVID-19.

The effectiveness of COVID vaccine in preventing hospitalization and disease severity is more after completing the vaccination program. The

complete vaccination program involves two intramuscular injections at an interval of a minimum of 4 weeks and a maximum of up to 12 weeks. The complete effect for the vaccination will be two weeks after the last dose.

While the vaccines have proven to be extremely effective at preventing serious disease, research studies are not conclusive yet on how well these vaccines stop transmission of the virus. As the vaccination is not 100% efficacious, the terms of quarantine depends on local guidelines.

Therefore, experts advise people who have been fully vaccinated to still follow safety protocols like hand washing, wearing a mask, maintaining social distance, etc.

What should be the ideal diet after taking the COVID-19 vaccine?

The updated guidelines of CDC (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention) on Food and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) state that while the vaccines are effective in preventing the disease severity and hospitalisation, you should also follow a self-care program involving proper diet and safety practices. Dietary advice on good nutrition includes:

- Eat a balanced diet, rich in essential nutrients.
- Take dietary supplements like Vitamins C and D and minerals like zinc after consulting your doctor. These nutraceuticals help boost your immunity and reduce inflammation. However, these supplements do not prevent or cure disease.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables, milk, and seafood are the best sources of nutrients.
- Lean protein and whole grains are also crucial for health.

- If you consider taking vitamins or dietary supplements, consult your vaccination doctor or registered dietitian before taking any supplements.

Note: Your sugar levels have to be under control as elevated glucose levels and diabetes can decrease immunity and make you prone to the infection

Can a person who received the COVID-19 vaccine eat outside, at restaurants?

A fully vaccinated person has to take everyday actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 increases when you visit restaurants. Various factors that contribute to the risk of infection while eating out are as follows:

- Eating and drinking require the removal of mask.
- Low ventilation flow in the restaurants causes aerosol droplets to spread and accumulate in closed spaces.
- It is challenging to maintain a distance of a minimum of 6 feet in restaurants.
- Talking in restaurants can contribute to the production of more virus aerosols.

Therefore, it is better for a fully vaccinated person to avoid eating out, at restaurants (if possible) for few more months.

Is it safe for a patient dealing with neurological disease to take COVID-19 vaccine?

Both Covishied and Covaxin vaccines being administered in India appear to be safe for neurology patients across the spectrum. These vaccines are not made from a live or attenuated virus. There is no evidence that

COVID- 19 vaccines are contraindicated in any patient with a neurologic disorder. The odds for personal protection from such vaccine are excellent. Based on the neurology patients' condition, some may receive the vaccine on priority. For example, people with weakened respiratory systems owing to neuromuscular disease. Owing to the high risk of mortality, frail patients suffering from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, multiple sclerosis, or advanced Parkinson's disease, for instance, may also receive the vaccine on priority. Patients with dementia can be ideal candidates too if they are unable to consistently practice social distancing or wearing a mask.

However, vaccination of the patients receiving immunosuppressive therapy may need consideration of timing and potential modification of the treatment. In the patient receiving B cell depletion therapy (rituximab), the vaccine's effectiveness may diminish.

If you have questions on your specific neurologic condition, kindly speak to your doctor.

Will COVID-19 vaccine affect my heartbeat?

While there are some temporary side effects like pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain and fever as common reactions, people have rarely experienced any severe side effects after a COVID-19 vaccine. Severe side effects may include immediate allergic reactions such as hives, swelling and wheezing.

Anaphylaxis (a severe type of allergic reaction) typically happens shortly after receiving the vaccine. Symptoms to look out for are after vaccination include:

- Trouble breathing
- Tightness in the throat

- Feeling dizzy or faint
- Pain in the abdomen
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- A rapid heartbeat
- Low blood pressure (hypotension)
- A feeling of doom

The Hospital staff at COVID Vaccination Centres are trained for emergencies and have the necessary medications to deal with any emergency. The staff will monitor you for at least 30 minutes after administering the vaccine to ensure you do not develop any serious side effects.

What should be the ideal duration between the two doses of vaccine?

Currently, Covishield and Covaxin are being administered in India. The ideal duration between the two doses depends on the type of vaccine.

According to the current government protocol, the second dose of the vaccine must be administered in 28 days after the first dose. However, new research on Covishield suggests that the booster dose might be more effective if the gap between the two doses is between 6-12 weeks.

The DNA-based AstraZeneca vaccine was found effective with a duration of 12 weeks between two shots. However, consult your doctor to understand the ideal duration between the two vaccines

Please note, the Covishield and Covaxin vaccines cannot be interchanged with each other or other COVID-19 vaccine products. The CDC guidelines

recommend receiving the same type of COVID-19 vaccine for the first and second dose increases vaccine efficacy.

What to Expect at Your Appointment to Get Vaccinated for COVID-19?

You should first register via Co-Win app, Aarogya Setu app or by logging on to https://www.cowin.gov.in and provide registration slip or token at the vaccination centre. You need to bring some photo identification proof card, like Aadhar card as well. Following this, your temperature is measured. As the vaccines is administered through an intramuscular route, a small area on your arm will first be sterilized with a solution, and then the vaccine dose is injected through a syringe.

You will receive the vaccination card or a printout which will have the information about your vaccination date, place of vaccination and whether you've received the COVID-19 vaccine shot 1 or 2. You may also get an electronic receipt (mostly an sms). You will be informed of the scheduled date of the next vaccine dose. Along with that, you will be provided with a fact sheet that will help you understand more about the risks and benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine which is being offered to you.

After providing you with the vaccine, you will be monitored for a minimum of 30 minutes to check for any side-effects of the vaccine on your body. Side-effects are subject to some allergic reactions as your body might reject or take some time to adapt the vaccine ingredients.

What precautions should be followed during your appointment for vaccination?

The following precautions are compulsory during your appointment for vaccination:

Follow all the hand hygiene recommendations and:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask
- Stay at least six feet away from others
- Follow all respiratory hygiene/cough etiquettes

If you are taking medicines for some serious ailments, can you get a COVID shot?

People taking medicine for and suffering from certain serious diseases like cancer or certain heart diseases, are more prone to catch severe COVID-19 infection, leading to even death. Therefore, these people are, highly recommended to take the COVID vaccination. However, they should first consult their specialist doctors beforehand about getting the vaccination. In some cases, the side effects brought out by the vaccine may aggravate and cause more trouble. Hence, although it is advisable for people with severe ailments to get COVID shot, they have to be super cautious.

If a person has some serious side effects after the first COVID shot, is he/she eligible for a second dose?

All of us must have heard of the fact that one might experience some side effects after the first shot of the COVID vaccine. However, the magnitude of these side effects might range from being intolerable to non-existent. If

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the side effects of the first shot are varying from a headache, dizziness, and body-aches to serious fatigue and flu-like conditions, one should wait for the reactions to calm down, keep consulting the doctor and be transparent about the changes noticed in these days. If the conditions get better with time, it is advisable to opt for the second dose as per the doctor's advice. The reactions to the vaccine entering your body are just another sign of the medicine working properly and are nothing to be stressed about until they get extremely worse and are expanding uncontrollably. About 40 to 50% of people experience these side effects after taking the second shot.

I just got recovered from COVID, why do I need to get COVID shots?

Yes, it is advisable to receive complete schedule of COVID vaccination irrespective of past history of COVID-19 infection. This will help in developing a strong immune response against the disease.

COVID-19 infection offers your body natural, systematic immunity by creating protective antibodies against it, COVID vaccine shot work by training your body to recognise and fight off this infection. This called 'vaccine driven immunity'. Either way, both mediums work to provide your body immunity. However, with limited research, it is still unknown as to how long the natural immunity last. As cases of reinfection have emerged across the world, there are strong odds of you catching COVID-19 more than once. Therefore, getting vaccinated, even after you have had COVID-19 infection may work to prevent future bouts of COVID-19 infection.

Are the current COVID vaccines safe for children?

While COVID-19 vaccines are effective in preventing hospitalisation and disease severity after completing the vaccination program, children (for now) are not eligible to take the currently available COVID-19 vaccines. The safety and efficacy data of different COVID-19 vaccines in children is not known. Therefore, manufacturers of the vaccine have specified the lowest eligible age for vaccination as follows:

1. **COVISHIELD® vaccine** manufactured by Serum Institute of India Pvt. Ltd. is for individuals 18 years of age or more.
2. **COVAXIN® vaccine** manufactured by Bharat Biotech International Limited is indicated for individuals 18 years of age or more. Earlier, the DCGI (Drugs Controller General of India) had approved the administration of the COVAXIN® vaccine for children above 12 years of age. Phase 2 clinical trial of COVAXIN® vaccine involved 380 participants of age between 12 to 65.

Can I get COVID-19 positive after the second dose of the vaccine?

Yes. You may still test positive for COVID-19 infection after being vaccinated since it is not 100% effective. The COVID-19 vaccines do not offer immediate protection and will not prevent disease.

COVID-19 vaccines are effective in preventing hospitalisation and disease severity. Vaccines offer benefits only after completing the full vaccination program. The complete vaccination program involves two intramuscular injections at an interval of a minimum of 4 weeks and a maximum of up to 12 weeks.

Even after full vaccination, SARS-CoV-2 virus can infect you. You may not show any symptoms and become a carrier of the virus, and may still transmit the disease to others.

Therefore, though you are fully vaccinated, you can be tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Experts advise vaccinated people to follow the safety guidelines for self-protection and prevent transmission of the virus to other people.

Will the Covid-19 vaccine make my muscles weak?

While you may experience certain frequently reported side effects like pain, redness, warmth, mild swelling or firmness around the area where COVID vaccine is injected, there is no evidence that the vaccine may make your muscles weak. You may find the arm tender and difficult to move, but it does not cause any muscle weakness.

You can take over-the-counter painkillers, if there is any pain around the injection site. These medications may also help relieve fever, headache, muscle, or joint pain. But do remember to avoid taking any pain killers before COVID- 19 vaccination. It may hamper your body's normal immune response to the vaccine.

Is it safe to take the vaccine if I am undergoing radiotherapy?

Yes. COVID vaccines can be administered to people receiving or who have received radiotherapy. Cancer treatments, especially chemotherapy, can lower immunity. In such situations, there may be a problem with 'live' vaccines. COVID-19 vaccines are not 'live' vaccines. Experts on cancer

immunotherapy have recommended COVID-19 vaccines for cancer patients.

Vaccines can be given before, during, or after cancer treatment. For patients who were vaccinated for COVID-19 while undergoing chemotherapy or cancer treatment with other immunosuppressive drugs and have since regained their immune competence, re-vaccination is not advisable currently.

Your doctor may recommend starting a treatment that affects your immune system, such as chemotherapy or immunotherapy, after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. It may improve vaccine effectiveness. But in some situations, people may need to start treatment before having the vaccine.

You may talk to cancer specialists at Apollo Hospitals for any advice or assistance. Our healthcare team can tell you about the options available in your situation.

Will COVID-19 vaccination cause infertility to men or women?

No. These are rumours and false information. Until now, there is not a single piece of evidence that shows that COVID-19 vaccination has caused infertility in men or women. Studies show that women who were exposed to COVID-19 vaccine became pregnant also, it was proven that even pregnant women who had taken the vaccine had safely delivered their babies. Therefore, from the real-world facts, there is not a piece information or evidence that can prove that vaccines can cause infertility.

After getting COVID-19 vaccination, can I be still report as positive in the RT-PCR test?

The answer is YES. But, there is an 'exception' to it. When you have had the first dose of the vaccine and then came into contact with a COVID-19 positive patient with no proper protection like mask, hand-hygiene and social distancing, your chances of getting COVID-19 positive after the RT-PCR test increases, the same goes after getting the second shot of vaccine as well.

Researchers have explained that each individual has a different level of cell reaction period, also the immune system differs from person-to-person. The vaccine is like a shield of protection that will take time – a day, or week, or a month to build immunity, depending on the person's immune system. In the same way, your body may also need certain time to get adjusted to the vaccine for preventing the COVID-19 virus infection and forward transmission.

Therefore, it is stated that there is a low chance that the vaccine will start its reaction immediately. Hence, it advised to actively continue with all COVID-19 preventive measures.

Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA?

This is not TRUE. Many people around the world are given COVID-19 vaccination, while a few are still hesitant to get the shot as they think that the vaccine alters their DNA irreversibly and forever. **You should verify your source of information before believing in them.**

Is it necessary to maintain physical distancing after getting 2 doses of vaccination?

Yes! Scientists warned that those who have been vaccinated, should maintain social distance even after receiving the second jab as the vaccines they take days and sometimes several weeks before they are maximally effective.

In addition, although a full course of vaccination will reduce your chance of getting seriously sick from COVID-19, it is still not clear whether being vaccinated can stop you from catching and/or passing on the virus to others. Therefore, it is really important you to stay on guard even if you've had that second dose

Is it necessary to wear a mask getting vaccinated after dose?

Yes. You will have to continue wearing a mask a while longer. Getting vaccinated does not mean that we can go back to a normal life immediately. Till we achieve a degree of herd immunity, the vaccinations are now just another layer of protection against the COVID-19 pandemic. And, in order to reach herd immunity, about 50 to 80 per cent of the population will have to be vaccinated.

You will not reach maximal efficacy for at least two weeks after your second vaccine dose and your immunity may continue to increase after that. However, this is an area that is undergoing active research now. While you do get partial immune response following the first dose, it does not mean you are immediately protected the minute you take the jab.

Another significant reason to continue wearing a mask is that we still have to protect those with compromised immune system (with chronic medical conditions like heart disease and cancer) and those individuals who cannot

be vaccinated (those who have had an allergic reaction to the first dose, some high risk pregnant women, etc.).

Can a person who has received COVID-19 Vaccine still spread COVID-19?

Yes. People can spread and can even develop COVID-19 infection after getting vaccinated. While getting vaccinated may give you considerable protection against falling sick with COVID, which can sometimes become fatal, you can still get infected with COVID-19 disease and may pass it on, potentially spreading it people who are not immune. A study estimated that those who get infected but never develop or show symptoms are responsible for 24 percent of transmission.

Some experts say that the immunity from the vaccine does not start to emerge until at least 12 days after vaccination. Vaccination helps protect against serious illnesses. Therefore, people who get vaccinated should continue to wear a mask, wash their hands, and maintain proper social distancing.

Can a patient with Guillian-Barre Syndrome be vaccinated?

Yes, patients with Guillian-Barre Syndrome can be vaccinated unless they have a contraindication to it. As most of the COVID-19 vaccinations are developed using the Sars-CoV-2 protein, it has not shown any significant increase in Guillian-Barre syndrome.

Guillian-Barre is a severe inflammatory borderline disorder, which can result in acute and sometimes permanent paralysis. Besides, it has been

observed that over one-third of patients can develop respiratory failure because of Guillian-Barre that can lead the patient to ICU and ventilation.

The individual risk of Guillian-Barre syndrome associated with COVID vaccination is extremely minor just like other complications. However, when it comes to the protection against COVID-19, the stats are much higher.

It is important for you to understand with every vaccination there is a small window of getting some side-effects. Till date no cases of increases Guillian-Barre syndrome has been reported that are associated with the COVID-19 vaccine.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients with Lung Cancer?

Healthcare experts recommend that people with cancers should take the COVID-19 vaccine. While, in general, lung cancer patients can take COVID vaccination, they should talk to their doctor in relation to their immune status based on their chemotherapy.

However, it depends on the condition of the patient. If a patient have had a serious reaction to or is allergic to anything should check with their doctor before getting vaccinated.

However, depending on the type of vaccination and the complexity of cancer, people first need to consult their physician to rule out any complications associated with COVID vaccination. Before going for vaccination, it is important to check whether the cancer patient is still undergoing cancer treatment or if his/her immune system is functioning properly.

If you or your loved ones is a lung cancer patient, consult the treating doctor before registering for vaccination, to see whether or not the body can safely accept the salts and chemicals used in the vaccine.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients with Chest Pain?

Experts say people with cardiovascular diseases are safe to take COVID-19 vaccination. Experts suggest that people with any kind of chest pain should get vaccinated in order to prevent themselves including their loved ones from getting COVID-19 disease.

The currently approved vaccinations shows that there are no considerable or specific problems with the vaccination, making it safe to use. Several medical experts say that vaccination is not only safe, but is also essential for people with chest pain, which poses the risk of heart disease.

COVID-19 vaccine is developed from s protein, making the immunity system strong enough to fight the virus. American Heart Failure Society strongly recommends the COVID-19 vaccine stating it to be safe and effective for people with heart conditions.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect women during the menstruation cycle?

The Covid is a respiratory disease that spreads mainly due to direct contact with a suffering person or coming in contact with the surface touched by a COVID-19 positive person. The severity of the disease is generally found

in mild or moderate levels in people. The vaccines for the pandemic disease are already made, and now women all over the world are getting vaccinated. As per the surveys on the people who have taken the vaccine, there is no significant impact on the menstruation cycle. There are no delay or missed periods due to vaccination in women.

There is a myth that it causes infertility in women, making women not opt to get the vaccination. But as per numerous doctors' statements and tests, there is no proof for this false theory.

What you should do before getting the COVID-19 vaccine?

First, check with your doctor if a COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for you right now. (Again, at preset, it is only being administered to healthcare and frontline workers, and to certain higher-risk groups, but this will change over time.)

Learn more about how the vaccine works and the benefits of getting COVID-19 vaccination. The Vaccination is a safer way to help build protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. Two major benefits of getting COVID-19 Vaccination include helping to keep you from getting COVID-19 infection and stopping the spread of this global pandemic.

Here are some Dos & Don'ts to follow before taking COVID Vaccine

Dos

1. Eat earlier and arrive well-rested: Ensure a good sleep the night before your vaccination appointment. This will help your immune system to work at its fullest potential. Also, if your appointment is around mealtime, eat beforehand and drink water.

2. Stay hydrated before the vaccine.
3. Wear loose clothing. Wear clothing that allows the vaccinator to access your upper arm easily as the vaccine is given at the deltoid muscle (the big muscle on the shoulder) – Consider wearing a short-sleeved shirt, if possible

Don'ts

1. **Avoid alcohol:** While there are no official guidelines on this, it is a good idea not to drink alcohol the night before the vaccination
2. **Avoid Painkillers:** It is best to avoid painkillers unless you take them routinely for some medical condition. People should not take a painkiller as a preventive measure anticipating any potential side effects before getting a vaccine.

What to expect during COVID-19 Vaccine?

As reported, a time slot is allotted to for your turn to get the vaccination, which will happen in one of the selected medical centers right now. While a COVID vaccine is no different from any other vaccines, you have to follow the given precautions when you go for your appointment to get vaccinated since we are still in the middle of a pandemic and you will not be considered fully safe and immune till you get the second dose.

Follow these precautions during your appointment for vaccination:

1. Follow all the hand hygiene recommendations
2. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask
3. Stay at least six feet away from others (until it is time to be vaccinated)
4. Follow all respiratory hygiene/cough etiquettes

The vaccines will be given via an intramuscular route. A small area on your arm will be first sterilised with a solution, and then the vaccine dose will be injected through a syringe.

People who have successfully taken the vaccine will get a receipt (mostly an SMS – the electronic receipt). They will also be informed of the scheduled date of the next vaccine dose as well.

You will be asked to wait for 30 minutes to make sure you don't have a adverse reaction.

What to expect after getting COVID-19 vaccine?

You will not be considered fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 pandemic until you get a second shot, which is usually given after 28 days. And you will have to talk to your vaccine provider for any specifics on that.

You may experience some minor side effects after getting vaccinated. Some of the most common side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine include:

• Pain at the injection site
• Swelling in your arm (where you got your shot)
• Chills
• Fever
• Headache
• Tiredness

If you experience arm swelling or soreness, hold a cool, clean wet washcloth over the area. Dress lightly and drink plenty of fluids if you have a fever. However, if you have pain or discomfort, it is better to talk to your doctor about taking any OTC (over-the-counter) medicine.

Generally, the side effects (if you have them) may go away in a day or two. But, do call your doctor if your side effects do not seem to go away after a few days and if the tenderness or redness in the area you got the shot increases after 24 hours.

It is recommended that you get the second shot of COVID-19 vaccine even if you have side effects after the first one, unless your doctor or the vaccination provider tells you not to get a second shot.

Please understand that even with two shots, it can take a little time for your body to build up immunity to COVID-19. The CDC says that despite taking both the shots, you may not be fully protected until 'a week or two' after the second shot.

Words of Caution

It is still important to wear a mask in public, maintain social distancing, follow hand hygiene recommendations, respiratory hygiene/cough etiquettes and follow other methods of preventing the spread of COVID-19 infection. The vaccine is not 100% perfect, after all, and it is not clear at this point whether an individual can still spread the virus after he/she has been vaccinated. Therefore, keep following recommendations until the public health officials advise otherwise.

Where should I report about side-effects of the COVID-19 Vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccine sure has some mild side-effects on the recipients such as lethargy, cold, and weakness. But they go away within a few days. However, if the side-effects last longer and turn out to be adverse, your

case will be reported as an AEFI (Adverse Event(s) Following Immunisation).

If you report or show any serious/adverse side-effects after the COVID-19 vaccine

- Firstly, your health care workers will start treating your symptoms.
- Next, a detailed investigation will be initiated to assess the cause of those symptoms, how common these symptoms are in the community, region or country, and if they are linked to problems with transport, storage, or administration of the vaccine shot.

Reporting the adverse side-effects of the vaccination encourages the authorised companies to look for the uncertainties. If a genuine adverse reaction is suspected, health authorities may suspend the use of vaccine. Meanwhile, these investigations are supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO), and they are also tracking adverse reactions to COVID vaccines around the world.

Nonetheless, it is extremely rare to have serious health problems to be directly caused by the vaccine.

Can patients consuming immunosuppressing drugs be vaccinated?

If the patient is non-allergic to any ingredient of the vaccination and no contradictions are reported after any vaccination, then the patient/recipient can go ahead to get COVID-19 vaccination.

In fact, medical experts believe that patients who are about to receive immunosuppressant should be on the priority list of vaccination, at least

two weeks before. This is because during this time their immune system functions better and is more likely to respond positively.

Whether it is patients with immunosuppressant therapy, chemotherapy, biological therapies, protein kinase inhibitors, or oral medications, they should be part of the prioritisation process for COVID-19 vaccination. Even if recipients have been vaccinated, they should keep in mind that they still need to follow the guidelines of social distancing to protect themselves.

Also, remember that the candidates who are vaccinated for COVID-19 and are undergoing therapies for immunosuppressant do not need to get re-vaccinated.

However, it is recommended that patients on immunosuppressants should talk to your doctor before getting vaccinated to get a better idea.

Can COVID-19 vaccine be given to those who have received plasma treatment for COVID-19?

Yes! There is no harm in vaccinating people who undergo plasma treatment. However, people receiving the only thing to remember here is, there should be a 90 days gap between the therapy and vaccination. We all know how infectious coronavirus is and to what extent it can harm our respiratory system.

Based on the antibodies generated from the monoclonal or convalescent plasma, proceeding as the part of COVID-19 treatment it has been found that a person taking plasma treatment is safe to receive COVID-19 vaccine.

The pieces of evidence and trails reinstate that it is rare to get re-infected with coronavirus within 90 days after the initial infection has been stated positively. This is the reason, it is important for people to take the gap of 90 days to get vaccinated as a precautionary measure.

Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA?

This is not TRUE. Many people around the world are given COVID-19 vaccination, while a few are still hesitant to get the shot as they think that the vaccine alters their DNA irreversibly and forever. **You should verify your source of information before believing in them.**

Is it necessary to maintain physical distancing after getting 2 doses of vaccination?

Yes! Scientists warned that those who have been vaccinated, should maintain social distance even after receiving the second jab as the vaccines they take days and sometimes several weeks before they are maximally effective.

In addition, although a full course of vaccination will reduce your chance of getting seriously sick from COVID-19, it is still not clear whether being vaccinated can stop you from catching and/or passing on the virus to others. Therefore, it is really important you to stay on guard even if you've had that second dose

Words of Caution

It is still important to wear a mask in public, maintain social distancing, follow hand hygiene recommendations, respiratory hygiene/cough etiquettes and follow other methods of preventing the spread of

COVID-19 infection. The vaccine is not 100% perfect, after all, and it is not clear at this point whether an individual can still spread the virus after he/she has been vaccinated. Therefore, keep following recommendations until the public health officials advise otherwise.

Where should I report about side-effects of the COVID-19 Vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccine sure has some mild side-effects on the recipients such as lethargy, cold, and weakness. But they go away within a few days. However, if the side-effects last longer and turn out to be adverse, your case will be reported as an AEFI (Adverse Event(s) Following Immunisation).

If you report or show any serious/adverse side-effects after the COVID-19 vaccine

- Firstly, your health care workers will start treating your symptoms.
- Next, a detailed investigation will be initiated to assess the cause of those symptoms, how common these symptoms are in the community, region or country, and if they are linked to problems with transport, storage, or administration of the vaccine shot.

Reporting the adverse side-effects of the vaccination encourages the authorised companies to look for the uncertainties. If a genuine adverse reaction is suspected, health authorities may suspend the use of vaccine. Meanwhile, these investigations are supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO), and they are also tracking adverse reactions to COVID vaccines around the world.

Nonetheless, it is extremely rare to have serious health problems to be directly caused by the vaccine.

Can patients consuming immunosuppressing drugs be vaccinated?

If the patient is non-allergic to any ingredient of the vaccination and no contradictions are reported after any vaccination, then the patient/recipient can go ahead to get COVID-19 vaccination.

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The pieces of evidence and trails reinstate that it is rare to get re-infected with coronavirus within 90 days after the initial infection has been stated positively. This is the reason, it is important for people to take the gap of 90 days to get vaccinated as a precautionary measure.

Can COVID-19 vaccine be given to persons with a history of SARS-CoV-2?

Yes. Vaccination is important to all, even to those with the prior history of SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2) or COVID-19 disease – be it symptomatic or asymptomatic. Vaccination helps in developing a strong immune response against COVID-19 disease. However, person with confirmed COVID-19 infection may increase the risk of spreading the same to others at vaccination site. Therefore, as per the Indian Government's guidelines, infected individuals should defer vaccination for 2 weeks (14 days) after resolution of the symptoms. And the quarantine guidelines to defer vaccination by WHO is 4 weeks (28 days) after resolution of the symptoms.

These recommendations from medical experts across the world, applies to all types of COVID-19 vaccines.

Do COVID vaccines limit the asymptomatic spread of COVID?

As countries across the world roll out vaccines that prevent COVID-19, studies are under way to determine whether COVID vaccines can effectively stop spreading the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 disease. Vaccines that prevent transmission can help bring the pandemic under control if they are given to as many people as possible.

Preliminary studies suggest COVID-19 vaccines have been successful in reducing transmission of coronavirus. Many studies also show that vaccinated individuals have lower viral loads which translates to less spread.

Several clinical trials show that the vaccines have been successful in preventing the spread of the disease. But, it is too soon to say that vaccines work significantly in limiting the spread of the disease – either symptomatic or asymptomatic. Experts say that vaccines can prevent people from acquiring COVID-19 disease and may gradually reduce transmission.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients with Brain Cancer?

While researchers who developed the vaccines have not specifically looked at those living with a brain cancer, vaccination is recommended for

all cancer survivors and cancer patients receiving active therapy. Therefore, COVID-19 vaccines should be given to all cancer patients when they are eligible to receive the vaccine.

If cancer treatment is affecting your immune system, talk to your treating doctor who will advise you the best time for you to get COVID-19 vaccination as there may be a time during your treatment when the vaccine is likely to be most effective for you.

Can breast cancer patients get COVID-19 Vaccine?

Experts recommend COVID vaccination for all cancer survivors and cancer patients including breast cancer patients receiving active therapy as cancer patients (including breast cancer patients) have a higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19.

Breast cancer treatments usually make your immune system weak, and you become prone to infections. In such a case, you are at higher risk of severe complications after getting infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

However, talk to your doctor if you are currently receiving any therapy for breast cancer. People undergoing radiotherapy and chemotherapy should discuss with their doctor depending on the timing of their immunisation required.

Can Heart Disease Patients get COVID-19 Vaccine?

Yes, heart disease and stroke specialists recommend patients with heart conditions to get vaccinated for COVID-19 because adults of any age with certain underlying health conditions like hypertension or heart-attack are at increased risk for severe illness from the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes

![RKM Multi Specialty Hospital & Trauma Center logo]

COVID-19 disease. In addition, if you are an older adult and have a long-term health condition like heart failure, COVID-19 disease can be fatal.

The COVID-19 vaccines are tested in a large number of individuals and are safe and effective. In clinical trials, COVID-19 vaccines worked well for people with underlying health conditions in healthy individuals.

The most common side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines are pain, swelling at the injection site, and flu-like symptoms, including fever, runny nose, and cough. Symptoms generally last for a few days. As a heart patient, your symptoms will not be different from those of everyone else.

However, speak to your doctor if have specific question about your conditions and vaccination.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients with malaria?

India currently has two COVID-19 vaccines – Covaxin and Covishield. Fever, mild pain, swelling, and nausea are some of the side effects people may have after getting vaccinated.

Everyone should get vaccinated. However, any patient undergoing malaria treatment should avoid getting vaccinated until he or she is fully recovered. Also, after recovering from malaria, patients should ensure that they do not have contraindications to vaccination.

Moreover, if you are taking malaria tablets like hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine for malaria treatment, inform your doctor before deciding to take COVID-19 vaccine. Make sure to share all the details related to your past medical history, allergies, and drugs you may be taking to your doctor before getting vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients with gallstones? – Need approval from Gastro

COVID-19 can present distinctively with digestive symptoms, without any respiratory manifestations, a long time from onset to admission, and a worse prognosis.

Acute abdominal pain can also be an early clinical feature of COVID-19 in a rare presentation. It is not surprising that the COVID- 19 viruses are found in a patients' gallbladder and may have been found even without the development of any gallbladder problems. Specialized cells in this organ, too, have high levels of ACE2 receptors. Damage to the gallbladder (like the pancreas) can cause digestive symptoms. The Covid-19 virus hijacks cells via ACE2 receptors found in our body cells.

The infection by the COVID-19 virus that triggers cholecystitis via a yet unknown mechanism was reported in several cases. Patients with a medical condition – are at much greater risk from the virus than from the vaccine.

Therefore, the COVID-19 vaccine administration is safe in patients with gallstones.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients with obesity?

The workability of the COVID-19 vaccine depends a lot on a healthy immune system. Previous scientific research shows that obesity has a negative impact on the body's immune system's function. However, it is encouraging that the US-based FDA's data show that the vaccine is quite beneficial, particularly for patients with obesity.

People with excess weight or obesity can follow two things: exercise and improve their food habits. Previous studies say that regularly exercising before receiving a vaccine positively affects your immune response. It produces up to four times more antibodies after getting exposed to bacteria or viruses. It means that antibodies are higher in those who exercised before administering the vaccine versus those who did not.

Also, the type and amount of your gut bacteria may impact the vaccine response. Therefore, obese people should get vaccinated against COVID-19.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine affect patients with skin allergies?

The instances of allergies have been very few so far. It is significant to know the causes of skin allergies before taking a COVID-19 vaccine shot. If a patient has a skin allergy, it is mandated to contact a doctor to know what ingredients of the COVID-19 vaccine can cause harm to the skin. The list of vaccine ingredients is available online in detail or by consulting a doctor. People with a history of skin allergies like itching, rashes, swelling, etc., are recommended for immunology consultation. A person with skin allergies can get vaccinated after a doctor's approval. People with a history of skin allergies or mild allergies can still get vaccinated as per the doctor's recommendation otherwise it could cause more harm than good and side effects will occur. Patients with skin allergic conditions are advised to stay under observation for 30 minutes to note reverse side-effects.

Contact your doctor if there's any rash after taking COVID vaccination.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine affect patients with Hepatitis B?

People suffering from Hepatitis B are not immunosuppressed and might respond to the COVID-19 vaccine as people without Hepatitis B do. There is no reason found so far that will cause side-effects for patients with Hepatitis B. Patients with active or inactive Hepatitis B infection can vaccinate themselves after consulting a doctor. There is no scientific reason found as to why they shouldn't get vaccinated yet. The studies have found that the result of an infection in Hepatitis B is low. Studies have also found that the process of the COVID-19 vaccine is associated with liver injury. So, patients with both Hepatitis B and liver injury should first consult with doctors as it is harmful. Patients with only Hepatitis B are not put under a high priority vaccination stage so far because the risk of side-effects is relatively low as compared to lung disease patients. However, patients suffering from Hepatitis B should consult a doctor before vaccinating themselves.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine affect patients with pancreatic transplants?

The studies have found that the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh any potential risks for pancreatic transplant patients.
Patients undergoing pancreatic transplants are at a higher risk because the consumption of this vaccine can lead to problems like immunosuppression and comorbidities (two or more diseases simultaneously). Therefore, discuss with your physician about vaccination based upon your specific level of immunosuppression

Will the COVID-19 vaccine affect liver transplants?

The studies have been found that the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh any potential risks for liver transplant patients.

The COVID-19 vaccines are less effective and might make lower antibodies in patients with liver transplants as compared to others without transplants. Treating physician's consultation is mandatory before vaccination for any transplant patients. Therefore discuss with your physician about vaccination based upon your specific level of immunosuppression

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients during surgery?

Patients during, before or after surgery – needs to be discussed with the doctor mainly because of the surgery and the timing of the vaccination

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients during organ transplant?

The people who are undergoing organ transplants are among the most vulnerable ones for any infection. These people have low immunity and a low count of antibodies. They have to be extra careful within their surroundings for the prevention of any disease, including COVID-19.

While generally it is safe to take COVID vaccination based on the patient's level of immunity, its is very important for an organ transplant to talk to their doctor before vaccination. Because, two COVID vaccines – Covishield and Covaxin – are currently approved for emergency use in India. While Covaxin is based on an inactivated whole virus, Covishield is based on weakened version of cold virus.

Since, organ transplant patients are immunosuppressed, they have to take vaccine based on inactivated virus, which is Covaxin. The injection of

Covishield may enhance the chances of coronavirus infection and fatal results.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients during knee transplant?

Yes. Knee transplant patients should receive the COVID-19 vaccine. While generally it is safe to take COVID vaccination based on the patient's level of immunity, it is very important for an knee transplant patient to first talk to his/her doctor before vaccination based on the timing of the surgery.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients during a kidney transplant?

Yes. Knee transplant patients should receive the COVID-19 vaccine. While generally it is safe to take COVID vaccination based on the patient's level of immunity, it is very important for a knee transplant patient to first talk to his/her doctor before vaccination based on the timing of the surgery.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients during chemotherapy?

Cancer treatments like chemotherapy can affect the immune system, which might make the vaccine less effective. Cancer experts are now recommending that people with cancer or history of cancer should get the COVID-19 vaccination. However, depending upon the timings of the

vaccination – it is advisable to discuss with your cancer doctor before getting vaccinated.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients during oncology treatment?

Some cancer treatments like chemotherapy, radiation therapy, immunotherapy can affect the immune system in cancer patients which may, in turn, make the vaccine less effective.

As cancer patient are prone to infections owing to their weakened immune system, oncologists are now recommending people with cancer or history of cancer to get the COVID-19 vaccination. However, depending upon the timings of the vaccination – it is advisable to discuss with your cancer doctor before getting vaccinated.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients with diabetes?

Diabetes, even if under control, can make it difficult for your immune system to face infections. So, you may be at a higher risk for more severe complications compared to people without diabetes.

Vaccination will provide the best protection against vaccine-preventable infections. Therefore, people with type 2 diabetes, due to their increased risk of infections including COVID-19, should get COVID-19 vaccination. However, it important to keep your glucose level under control to avoid infection

Vaccines are highly efficacious, well-tolerated, and show good immune response in people with underlying conditions, such as diabetes. Side

effects from the vaccine are relatively mild and go away, usually on their own. Severe side effects are rare.

Will COVID-19 Vaccine affect patients with liver cancer?

Liver cancer commonly occurs in people with chronic liver diseases such as hepatitis B or hepatitis C. Such patients are at higher risk for severe COVID-19 infection.

As cancer patient are prone to infections owing to their weakened immune system, oncologists are now recommending cancer patients or people with history of cancer to get the COVID-19 vaccination. However, depending upon the timings of the vaccination – it is advisable to discuss with your cancer doctor before getting vaccinated.

Why should you avoid drinking alcohol after taking a vaccine shot?

Vaccinated patients are advised not to drink alcohol for 45 days after vaccination. Alcohol causes negative effects on the immune response of the vaccine. Alcohol consumption could lead to impaired liver function and weakened immunity system of the body.

The effect of the vaccine will be counter-affected after the consumption of alcohol. Casual drinking of alcohol is acceptable because it would not counter the vaccine effects, but heavy drinking should be avoided as it could cause more harm than good.

It is better for a person to avoid drinking, the day before and the day after the vaccination for at least a couple of weeks, or 45 days to be exact as consumption of alcohol slows down the process of the immune response.

Is the variant COVID-19 strain a side effect of the vaccine?

No. The multiple strong mutated variants and strains of SARS-CoV-19 virus are not a side effect of the vaccine. Of all the vaccines available and approved for the treatment of novel coronavirus, none of them has become a reason for the mutation of the SARS-CoV virus itself. There are a lot of misleading definitions about the word "strain" out there.

A strain is nothing but a variant that has evolved and mutated differently from its parent virus while having the same properties. The COVID-19 strain does not create variants at this time. The virus mutates and gets converted into multiple variants but it is never because of the vaccine but because of the virus itself, viruses when spread on a larger scale tend to mutate and replicate themselves giving birth to a more potent strain every cycle.

How long is the effect of the COVID-19 vaccine?

We really do not know yet. As of now, the effect of COVID vaccine will last for several months or maybe much longer, while immunity to the disease will generate within two weeks of getting the second dose of COVID vaccine. The shots boosts your immune response, make new antibodies and offer protection

However, the range varies from person-to-person as the effect of the vaccine depends upon various external and internal factors like immunity power, internal disease or allergies, etc.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine be safe during lactation?

A lactating person is not put under a 'high-risk' medical condition because there is no data on the effects or safety of the COVID-19 vaccine. Look at the vaccine handout and please talk to your doctor before taking the vaccine.

Is it OK to exercise before or after taking the COVID vaccination?

Currently, there is no official guidance about the do's and don'ts about exercising around the time of COVID vaccination. While some studies on other vaccines show physical exercise done either before or after getting the jab may improve immune responses, it solely depends on how you react to any one of the authorised COVID-19 vaccines, which may cause side effects.

How your body may respond after taking the COVID-19 is entirely individualised. While some may experience no symptoms, others may have more significant side-effects. There will be a slight fever post-vaccination, but if the fever persists, consult your doctor or go to a hospital immediately. You must use common sense and assess how your body feels in the immediate hours and days after the shot.

Therefore, experts advise that you resume any regular exercise one to two days after the first or the second dose of the vaccination when feeling back

to normal. However, please check your health status with your doctor before starting any exercise regimen post-vaccination. Meanwhile, continue to follow appropriate safety measures when working out, especially in public.

Disclaimer

Please talk to your consultant before taking vaccination.

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