

Can vaccinated people spread COVID-19?

DR ZUBAIR KHALED HUQ

Vaccination is the key factor to minimise the risk of COVID-19, especially at a critical time like this when we are also facing added worries of an incoming third potential wave of coronavirus. COVID-19 vaccination can also be beneficial in lowering down severity and mortality risk associated with the illness. Scientifically, all approved COVID-19 vaccines have been well-studied and provide adequate protection; they may strengthen the body's immune response against the virus, lessen the complication risks, including hospitalisation.

Vaccines also work in reducing transmission rates. However, there is little proven evidence to support the claim yet. Even for the little evidence that we have that vaccines may reduce transmission to an extent, a lot depends on how well the vaccine works to block the infection.

Concerning how the SARS-CoV-2 virus spreads the asymptomatic transmission of the virus makes matters get scary. Not only does it remain to be a relatively new virus, but COVID-19 also poses particular challenges because the infection can be spread via



both symptomatic, as well as asymptomatic carriers. This means that a person, who does not exhibit symptoms and does not undergo testing, may silently be spreading the disease onto others. This is a scenario that can very well occur with vaccinated beneficiaries as well.

The second wave of coronavirus in many countries has been fuelled by a rising surge of different variants of the virus, which are not just super infectious and spread easily but also have the ability to surpass

antibodies. For example, the new Indian variant has mutated and changed its characteristics only to be more powerful, it also can evade many vaccines.

Anybody who has not been able to get vaccinated right now, or may not be eligible for vaccination is at the highest risk of catching the illness and suffering from poorer outcomes. So getting the opportunity, one should jump to take a jab.

This means that people who have medical conditions, chronic or poor immunity or

illness which prohibits them from vaccination, children below the age of 18 and the ones who are not willingly vaccinated all assume equal risks of contracting the infection. Vaccination is a weapon in our armoury, in our fight against breaking down the pandemic.

However, it is not the perfect cure. We should remember that vaccines just prevent infection possibilities, up to an extent and not take away all the risks entirely. Thus, following COVID-19 appropriate measures

are still important, before and after you get your vaccine dose.

Only when vaccines help us get to the herd immunity stage, wherein the majority of communities are inoculated and well-protected, would we be able to lower down our guards. Until then, measures should be followed and masks still should be on for a longer period, before the rate of infection goes down drastically. If one is vaccinated, s/he can get infected before the course is complete and has every chance of spreading it to anyone.

The more scary part is any stranger can make the vaccinated person infected. So the mask should always be on, if possible double can give better and sure protection. To be safe and be benign for others, wearing masks and maintaining social distance are foremost. Mask is cheap, easy and cosy that we fail to understand, and is credulous.

One thing we must have to remember – a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. So it is important to wear masks and maintain social distancing even after being vaccinated, for your safety and everyone else around you.

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DID YOU KNOW?

People with 'healthy obesity' are still at increased risk of disease

A new study published in *Diabetologia* (the journal of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes [EASD]) reveals that having a normal metabolic profile does not mean that a person with obesity is actually healthy (referred to as metabolically healthy obesity), since they face an increased risk of diabetes, heart diseases, strokes, and respiratory diseases.

Obesity typically leads to metabolic problems, characterised by elevated blood sugar, increased blood pressure, insulin resistance, and other adverse metabolic changes.

These effects are not universal, and some people with obesity have normal blood pressure, favourable blood fats, little or no systemic inflammation, and a healthy level of insulin. This is sometimes referred to as having 'metabolically healthy obesity' (MHO), and its occurrence is estimated to be 3% to 22% in the whole general population.

The authors found that MHO individuals were generally younger, watched less television, exercised more, had higher education levels, lower deprivation index, higher red and processed meat intake, and were less likely to be male and non-white than participants who were metabolically healthy obese (MUO).

Compared to metabolically healthy non-obese (MHN) participants, participants with MHO were 4.3 times more likely to have diabetes, 18% more likely to suffer heart attack or stroke, had a 76% higher risk of heart failure, were 28% more likely to suffer respiratory disease and 19% more likely to suffer COPD.

Compared to metabolically unhealthy people without obesity (MUN), those classed as MHO were 28% more likely to have heart failure.

HEALTH bulletin

The road to a healthy life



Children's psychological well-being worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic

Psychologically, children have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways from adults and have a distinct set of worries. Researchers examined caregivers' perceptions of their children's wellbeing following stay-at-home orders and subsequent school closures. Participants were recruited from a sample of caregivers with children enrolled in Chicago's public schools. Key findings include the following:

- Caregivers noted significant increases in all mental health concerns following school closure, including agitation, anxiety, depression, and stress.
- Change in perception of student loneliness was most significant (reported by 31.9% of caregivers after closure, compared with 3.6% before closure).
- Caregiver concerns about suicidal ideation increased by 20%, from 0.5% before closure to 0.6% during closure.

Although not surprising, the pandemic and subsequent school closures have had a significant negative impact on children's well-being, particularly in homes where COVID-19 exposure was the greatest.

Because this study reports caregiver perceptions and was conducted only three months into the pandemic, it may not tell the entire story and may underreport the true mental health effects. We should anticipate and plan for increasing demand for support and access to mental health services for children and their families for some time.

DR M MAHBOOB HOSSAIN

A healthy lifestyle is a way of living that lowers the risk of being seriously ill or dying early. We know that all diseases are not preventable, but a large proportion of deaths from coronary heart disease and lung cancer can be avoided by maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Physical activity and exercise are a major contributor to a healthy lifestyle. Regular exercise can help to prevent coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure. Regular weight-bearing exercise can also help prevent osteoporosis by building bone strength. It also helps chronic arthritis sufferers to improve their capacity. Additionally, regular exercise can help increase self-esteem and self-confidence, control body weight, decrease stress and anxiety, enhance mood, and improve general mental health.

About 90% of men and 80% of women are affected by lung cancer in many parts of the world. Smoking or chewing tobacco causes cancers of the lung, mouth, lip, tongue, oesophagus, kidney, and bladder. Furthermore, it increases the risk of arterial diseases like heart attacks, stroke, hypertension, and other chronic lung disease. Besides that, secondhand smoke or passive smoking can also cause lung cancer. So to lead a healthy life we must avoid tobacco and/or must quit smoking.

About 60% of our body is water. It is one of the most essential elements of each cell of our body. That is why staying hydrated is important to keep good health. However, our body releases heat by expanding blood vessels which results in more blood flow. Dehydration lowers the blood volume, so if we drink more water,



our hearts then can pump a large volume of blood, thus our body cell gets enough oxygen. Hence, we must drink enough water every day to remain well hydrated.

To have a sound mental and emotional state, we must surround ourselves with positive energy. We should surround ourselves with encouraging friends and people because it helps us to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. People with fewer or less active social contacts are at greater risk for cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and cancer. That why a strong social connection is good for our overall health.

Obesity is one of the major causes that place us at risk for high cholesterol, high blood pressure,

and insulin resistance which can lead to the risk of cardiovascular disease. Good nutrition, controlling calorie levels, and physical activity are the only way to maintain a healthy weight.

In conclusion, becoming healthy is something we must be dedicated to because it takes a lot of time and energy. However, the benefits we receive from making these simple changes lead us to greater benefits. Lastly, eating vegetables and fruits instead of junk food, drinking enough water instead of artificial beverages, and being physically active will help us to lead a healthy life.

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Surprising reasons you are gaining weight

If you started taking in more calories than usual or cutting back on exercise, you would not be surprised if the numbers on the scale crept higher. But what if you are doing everything the same as you always do, and your weight still goes up? Time to delve a little deeper into what else might be going on.

Lack of sleep: There are two issues at work with sleep and weight gain. First, if you are up late, the odds are greater that you are doing some late-night snacking, which means more calories. The other reason involves what is going on in your body when you are sleep-deprived. Changes in hormone levels increase hunger and appetite and also make you feel not as full after eating.

Stress: When life's demands get too intense, our bodies go into survival mode. Cortisol, the "stress hormone," is secreted, which causes an increase in appetite. And of course, we may reach for high-calorie comfort foods in times of stress as well. This combination is a perfect breeding ground for weight gain.

Hypothyroidism: If your thyroid is not making enough thyroid hormone, you are probably feeling tired, weak, cold, and gaining weight. Without enough thyroid hormone, your metabolism slows, making weight gain more likely.

Certain medications: Several prescription drugs are linked to weight gain. The list includes antipsychotic drugs, along with medications to treat migraines, seizures, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Source: WebMD



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