HARVARD T.H. CHAN | SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
India Research Center

SANCHAR | Science And News: Communicating Health And Research

COVID-19 Resources for India:

Be a Part of the Solution

A Communication Toolkit

#COVIDFreeIndia

Updated as of May 26, 2021

India's COVID-19 Crisis in 2021

India is amid its worst health crisis in recent history, with the unprecedented second wave of COVID-19 leaving millions of citizens infected and many still who have lost their lives. A decrease in the daily number of cases earlier this year led to a sense of complacency among citizens, with a decreased compliance to healthy behaviors such as wearing masks, hand washing and physical distancing among others, which have been shown to be effective at preventing COVID-19 transmission. This, in addition to sociopolitical factors, contributed to an increase in the number of daily infections in March 2021 and pushed the health system to the brink of collapse, causing a dearth of medical supplies and hospital beds and a constant state of uncertainty and panic.

Behavior change within the community and social networks have played a key role, not only in infection prevention through physical distancing and mask-wearing, but also in providing social support to one another through the crisis. Due to physical distancing measures and government-declared lockdowns, in-person interactions have been highly limited leading to an increase in the usage and engagement of social media channels for exchange of knowledge, psychosocial support, and the sharing of resources.

The increased usage of social media has also led to an uncontrolled and unchecked diffusion of misinformation and disinformation on prevention, treatment, prognosis, management, and vaccines for COVID-19. This spread of misinformation and disinformation through social media has led to panic, uncertainty, and mismanagement of the disease, in some cases leading to serious complications and even death.

Through this toolkit, the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health - India Research Center and Project SANCHAR aim to provide partners, affiliates, and citizens with shareable easy-to-understand facts, myth-busters, and guidelines on COVID-19 prevention and mitigation and on maintaining physical and emotional wellbeing. Our hope is that this toolkit serves as a useful resource for all and allows users to access and disseminate "evidence-based" accurate information.

About the Toolkit

What is the toolkit for?

- Disseminating evidence-based information on COVID-19 to all communities and stakeholders across social media platforms.
- Supporting target audience groups such as partners, affiliates, and the general public in their efforts to increase awareness about COVID-19 and promote compliance with public health measures.
- Encouraging the responsible use of social media for spreading key public health messages.

Who can use the toolkit?

- General public
- COVID-19 patients and caregivers
- Pregnant women and nursing mothers
- Public health organizations
- Journalists
- Physicians and other medical professionals
- Civil society organizations
- Governmental organizations

When can the toolkit be used?

- Given the urgency of the crisis, the time to act is now.
- We will be updating this toolkit at a regular frequency, based on your feedback & the latest evidence-based guidelines.
- The toolkit will also be available soon in major Indian languages.

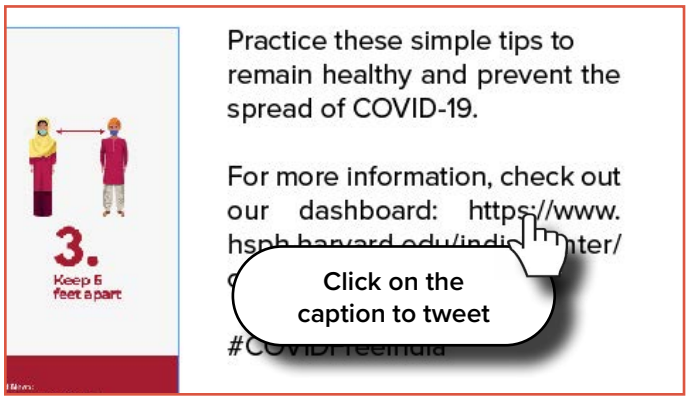
How can the toolkit be used?

- Share the infographics and video clips on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and other messaging apps.
- Click-to-tweet features and download links are enabled on our graphics and suggested captions.
- Infographics and captions for dissemination on WhatsApp are available here.
- The toolkit itself can be shared further as an “interactive pdf” on social media and other networks.

How to use the interactive elements of the toolkit

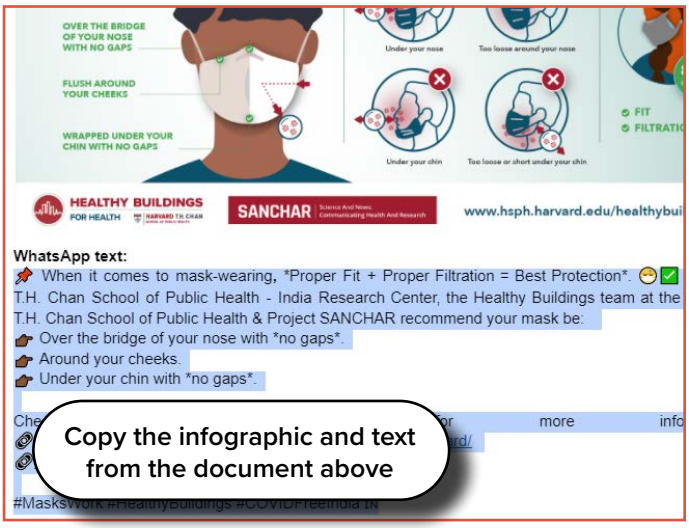
How to download an infographic?

How to share the information on Twitter?



How to share the information on WhatsApp?

Infographics and captions for dissemination on WhatsApp are available here.



How to watch a video?

Disclaimers

- This resource is not to be considered a substitute for medical advice. This only serves as a guide and not as a prescription. Please check with medical professionals before taking decisions regarding your diagnosis and health.
- Due to evolving/emerging evidence, guidelines are subject to change. Please check official guidelines from Government of India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in addition to the expert opinions highlighted in our resources.
- This is not a live document and is up to date as of May 26, 2021. Certain content will be dated as guidelines are updated. Please use your discretion when sharing materials and visit our websites for the latest versions in English and Hindi, at the following:

1. **Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health - India Research Center**
   https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/
   https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/covid-19-hindi-new/
2. **Project SANCHAR**
   https://projectsanchar.org
   https://hindi.projectsanchar.org/

Contents

Section 1:

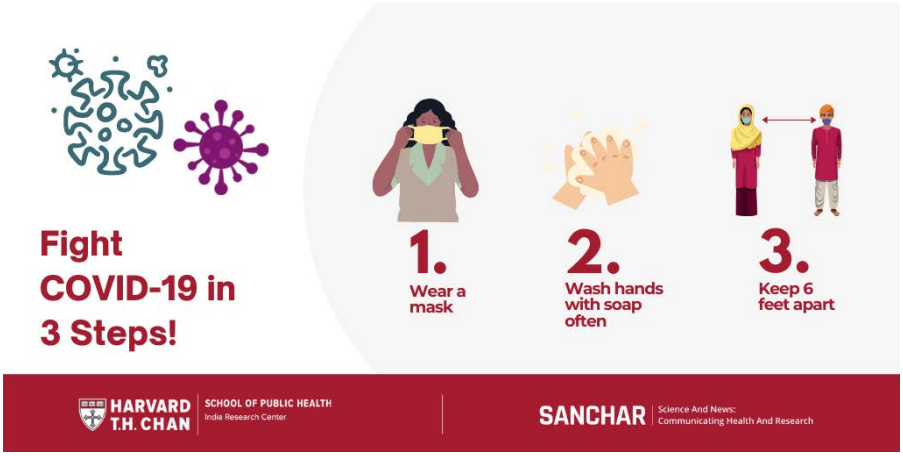
COVID-19 Prevention and Control

This section includes shareable infographics on COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures, expert advice from virologists, and relevant resources available on Harvard University's websites.

1

Resources for social media

What are some COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures one can practice?



Practice these simple tips to remain healthy and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

For more information, check out: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/ or https://projectsanchar.org/

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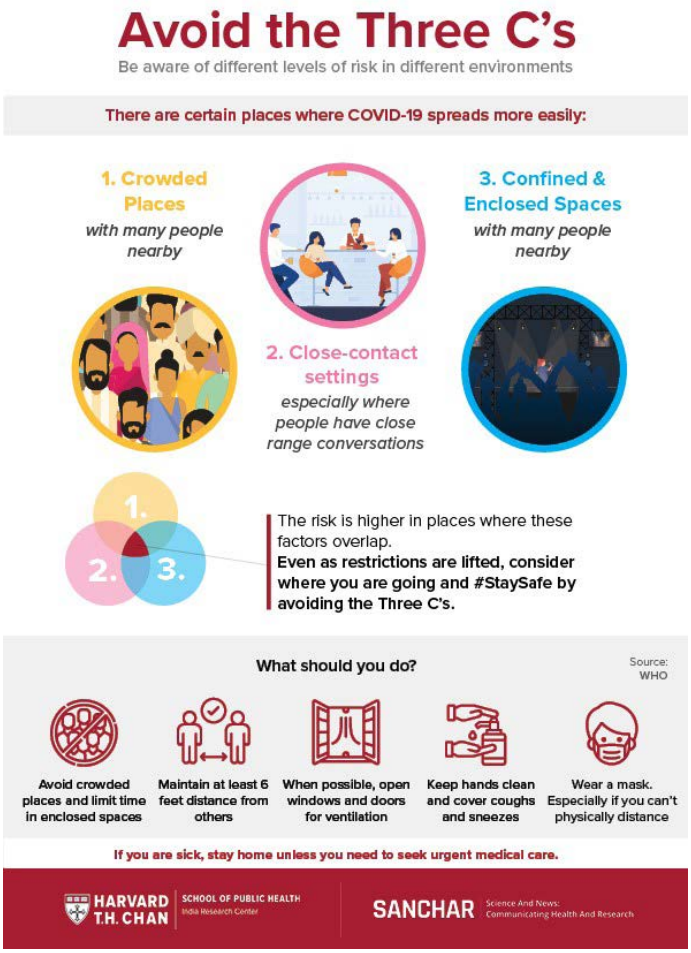
Avoid the three C's to stay safe



COVID-19 spreads easily in certain environments. Avoid the three C's to reduce the risk of exposure.

For more information, check out: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/ or https://projectsanchar.org/

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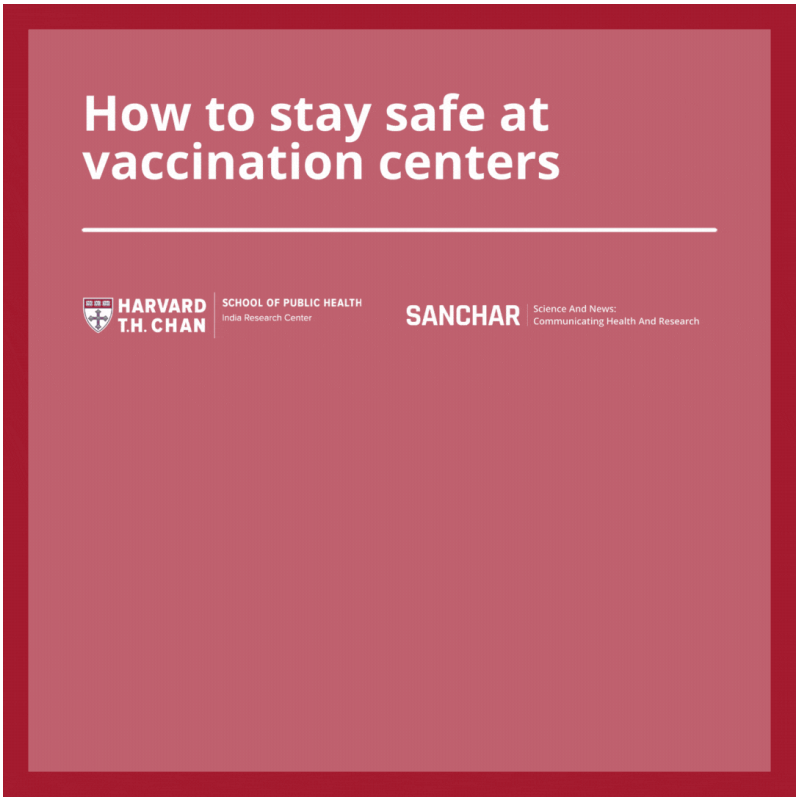
Adapted from: https://www.who.int/images/default-source/wpro/countries/malaysia/infographics/three-3cs/final-avoid-the-3-cs-poster.jpg?sfvrsn=638335c1_2

Staying safe at vaccination centers.



Click to play

Getting your COVID-19 vaccine is important and the best way to keep you healthy. When getting vaccinated make sure you stay safe by checking the tips below.

For more information, check out: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/

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Hear from Experts

Virology of COVID-19

This video release features Dr. Shahid Jameel, Director, Trivedi School of Biosciences, Ashoka University and renowned virologist. He discusses the biology of COVID-19 and the different COVID-19 vaccines available at the time. This expert interview was held in April 2021, and was conducted in Hindi by Mr. Mukesh Kejariwal, Head, National Integrated Bureau, *Rajasthan Patrika.*

For more information and similar video releases, please refer to Project SANCHAR's Dashboard and YouTube pages.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How does COVID-19 spread?

We know that COVID-19 is caused by the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), which spreads between people in several different ways. The virus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe. These particles range from larger respiratory droplets to smaller aerosols (lighter particles that can float and stay in the air longer than droplets, up to three hours).

Current evidence suggests that the virus spreads mainly between people who are in close contact with each other, typically within 2 meters/ 6 feet. Hence, people should maintain at least 6 feet distance from others. A person can be infected when aerosols or droplets containing the virus are inhaled or come directly into contact with the eyes, nose, or mouth. Wearing a properly fitting mask can help decrease this risk.

The virus can also spread in poorly ventilated and/or crowded indoor settings, where people tend to spend longer periods of time. This is because aerosols remain suspended in the air or travel farther than 2 meters/ 6 feet. When possible, open windows and doors for proper ventilation.

People may also become infected by touching surfaces where droplets containing the virus have landed when touching their eyes, nose or mouth without cleaning their hands. Wash your hands with soap and water regularly, and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, tabletops, switches, mobile phones.

Further research is ongoing to better understand the spread of the virus and which settings are most risky and why. Research is also under way to study virus variants that are emerging and why some spread more easily than others.

For more information, please visit: https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-COVID-19-how-is-it-transmitted
To gain an understanding of COVID-19 transmission in indoor environments, visit: https://covid-19.forhealth.org/covid-19-transmission-calculator/

Can COVID-19 be caught from a person who has no symptoms?

Infected people can transmit the virus to other people up to 2 days before they develop symptoms. Whether or not they have symptoms, infected people can be contagious, and the virus can spread from them to other people. And people who develop severe disease can be infectious for longer.

For more information, please visit: https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-how-is-it-transmitted

Are there certain settings where COVID-19 can spread more easily?

Yes, any situation in which people are standing or sitting close to one another for long periods of time increases the risk of transmission. Indoor locations, especially settings where there is poor ventilation, are riskier than outdoor locations. Activities where more particles are expelled from the mouth, such as singing or breathing heavily during exercise, also increase the risk of transmission.
The "Three C's" are a useful way to think about this. They describe settings where transmission of the COVID-19 virus spreads more easily:

- Crowded places;
- Close-contact settings, especially where people have conversations very near each other;
- Confined and enclosed spaces with poor ventilation.

The risk of COVID-19 spreading is especially high in places where these "3Cs" overlap.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. Other symptoms include repeated shaking with chills, muscle pains, headache, sore throat and new loss of taste or smell.

Those who are ill may also have fatigue (tiredness), nasal congestion (stuffy nose), or diarrhea; however, many people who become infected do not have any symptoms. Most people who get COVID-19 get better without needing special treatment. However, some become very ill. Please talk to your doctor about any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

What steps can my family take to reduce our risk of getting COVID-19?

Practice everyday preventive actions to help reduce your risk of getting sick and remind everyone in your home to do the same. These actions are especially important for older adults and people who have chronic medical conditions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick, except when you need medical care.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with the inside of your elbow or a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash. Then wash your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before cooking or eating.
- If you do not have soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that people touch a lot (e.g. phones, other electronics, tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles).
- Get vaccinated.

What resources are available to me if I am struggling with issues related to sexual or domestic violence during this time?

Pandemics like COVID-19 have significant impact on individuals, families and countries. People not only have to deal with the consequences of infection but also have to deal with potential consequences of measures taken to contain the infection like quarantines, social distancing and lockdowns. Individuals face issues related to health, finances and security concerns and these can impact their mental health and their relationships. Since there are curbs on the movement of the individuals, people who are in abusive relationships face challenges as they are likely to be in close confined spaces with the perpetrators and may have difficulties in getting timely help.

UN WOMEN has reported rates of increased violence against women and children (more so girls) in the COVID-19 times. Hence it is important to address this issue as it can lead to further crisis and possibly secondary trauma.

If there is an imminent danger of violence to you or to someone you know, please contact the nearest police station (Police helpline Phone 1091) or Government of India (National commission for women-domestic violence help-line, Phone 181).

Source: Mental Health in the times of COVID-19 Pandemic, NIMHANS, https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/COVID19Final2020ForOnline9July2020.pdf

For more information and similar frequently asked questions, please refer to our English and Hindi COVID-19 dashboards at:

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health – India Research Center
Dashboard in English
Dashboard in Hindi

Project SANCHAR
Dashboard in English
Dashboard in Hindi

Myth-busters

This section presents myth-busters to address common concerns around COVID-19 in India and to reduce the spread of misinformation and disinformation.

FACT: It is NOT true that antibiotics can prevent or treat COVID-19.
Antibiotics work only against bacteria, not viruses. COVID-19 is caused by a virus, and therefore antibiotics should not be used for prevention or treatment. Some people who become ill with COVID-19 can also develop a bacterial infection as a complication. In this case, antibiotics may be recommended by a health care provider.

FACT: It is NOT true that eating garlic (and other foods commonly used as home remedies for flu and common cold) can help prevent infection with COVID-19.
Garlic is a healthy food that may have some antimicrobial properties. However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic (or other foods for that matter) has protected people from COVID-19.

FACT: COVID-19 CAN be transmitted in areas with hot and humid climates.
The COVID-19 virus can be transmitted in ALL AREAS, including areas with hot and humid weather.

FACT: Drinking warm water and getting enough sunlight are NOT primary ways to protect against COVID-19.
There is no evidence that the COVID-19 can be killed at higher temperatures. Drinking warm water and getting enough sunlight may have other health benefits.

FACT: COVID-19 affects people of ALL ages.
People of ALL AGES can be infected by COVID-19. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus. WHO advises people of all ages to take steps to protect themselves from the virus, for example by following good hand hygiene and good respiratory hygiene.

For more myth-busters, please refer to our English and Hindi resources at:

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health – India Research Center
Resources in English
Resources in Hindi

Project SANCHAR
Resources in English
Resources in Hindi

Section 2:

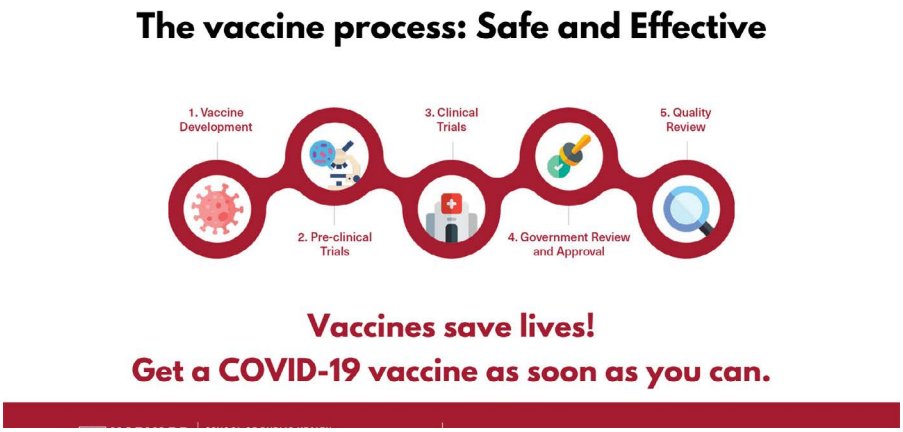
Vaccines and Vaccinations

This section includes shareable infographics on the types of COVID-19 vaccines, their development and side-effects, and guidance on how to stay safe at vaccination centers. This section also corrects misinformation around COVID-19 vaccines and provides global lessons on COVID-19 vaccination. It also includes resources available on Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health - India Research Center's and Project SANCHAR's websites.

2

Resources for social media

The vaccine process: Safe and Effective



Vaccines go through a thorough development process to ensure safety. Check out what steps are taken to test vaccines.
For more information, check out: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/ or https://projectsanchar.org/

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How do we know if a vaccine is safe & effective?

All approved vaccines are safe and help protect you from COVID-19. The infographic below describes the testing process these vaccines go through to be safe for use.
For more information, check out: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/

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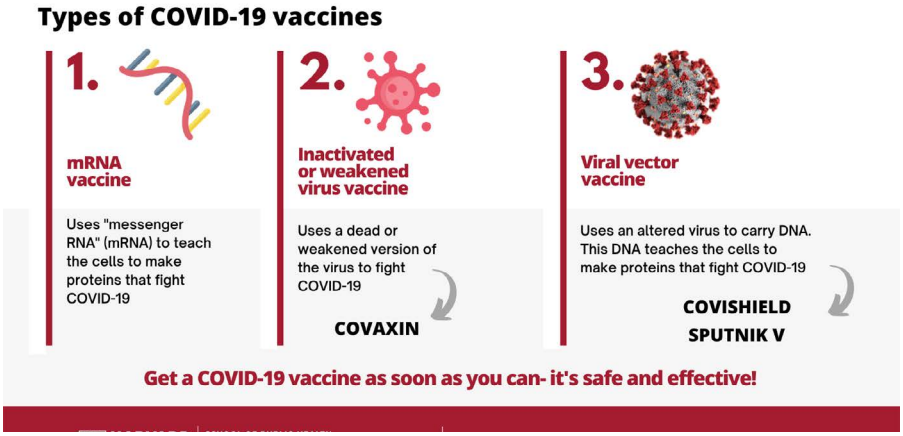
What are the different types of COVID-19 vaccines that are available?



All vaccines are safe and help protect you from COVID-19. The infographic below explains the differences between the vaccines.
For more information, check out: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/ or https://projectsanchar.org/

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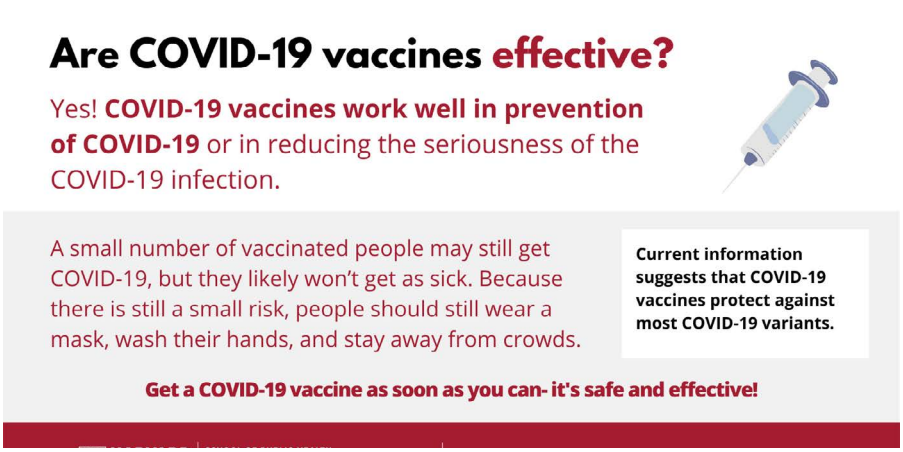
Are COVID-19 Vaccines effective?



All approved #COVID19Vaccines are effective against COVID-19 and help prevent infection, severe illness & death. The best way to remain safe is to get vaccinated, #WearMasks, wash hands & avoid crowds.

https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/

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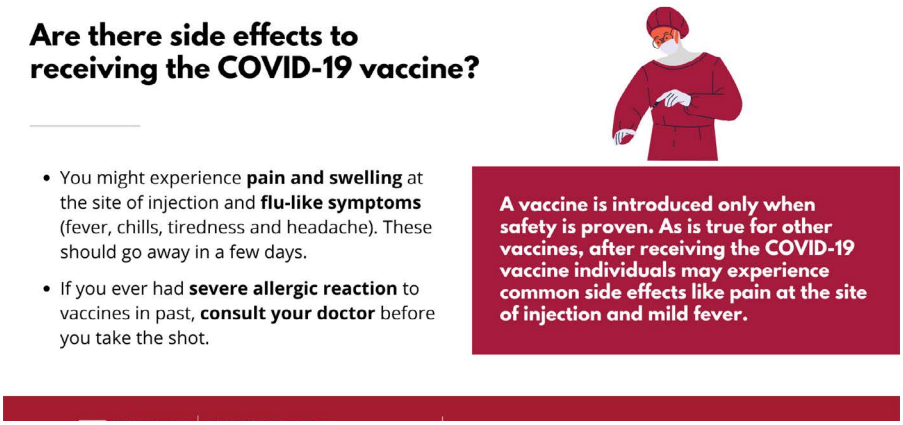
Side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine



It is common for individuals to experience side effects after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. These include:

1. Mild fever
2. Pain at the site of injection
3. Flu-like symptoms

https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/

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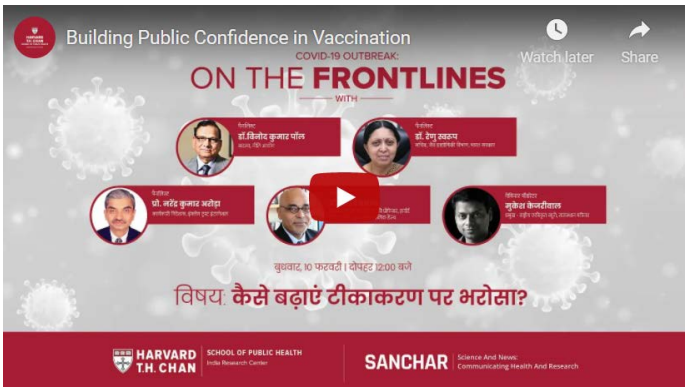
Hear from Experts

Misinformation around COVID-19 Vaccines

This video release features Dr. K. Viswanath, Lee Kum Kee Professor of Health Communication, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, where he talks about what stakeholders such as scientists, journalists, healthcare workers and the private sector can do to combat misinformation around COVID-19 vaccines. The video is subtitled in Hindi. This is an expert interview from February 2021, conducted by Mr. Mukesh Kejariwal, Head, National Integrated Bureau, *Rajasthan Patrika.*

Building Public Confidence in Vaccination (कैसे बढाएं टीकाकरण पर भरोसा?)



This webinar features Dr. Renu Swarup, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Govt. of India, Dr. Vinod Kumar Paul, Member - NITI Aayog, Dr. N.K. Arora, Executive Director, INCLEN Trust International, and Dr. K. Viswanath, Lee Kum Kee Professor of Health Communication, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health on the panel. The panelists discuss India's vaccination drive and strategies to enhance public trust in vaccination. This was a bilingual webinar, with panelists conversing in both English and Hindi. The webinar was moderated by Mr. Mukesh Kejariwal, Head, National Integrated Bureau, *Rajasthan Patrika* and was conducted in February 2021.

Development of COVID-19 Vaccines and the Myths related to COVID-19 Vaccines

This video release features Dr. N.K. Arora, Executive Director, INCLEN Trust International and Chair, COVID-19 Subcommittee of National Technical Advisory Group for Immunization (NTAGI) Government of India, where he discusses the development and regulatory process of COVID-19 vaccines in India, herd immunity, side-effects of COVID-19 vaccines, and learnings from India's experience with vaccination programs. This expert interview was conducted in Hindi, by Mr. Mukesh Kejariwal, Head, National Integrated Bureau, *Rajasthan Patrika* in February 2021.

COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout: Lessons from Around the World

This webinar features Dr. Barry Bloom, Joan L. and Julius H. Jacobson Research Professor of Public Health and Former Dean, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Dr. Swati Piramal, Vice Chairperson, Piramal Group, and Mr. Luigi D'Aquino, Chief of Health, UNICEF India, on the panel. Dr. K. Viswanath, Lee Kum Kee Professor of Health Communication, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health moderated the discussion on challenges and opportunities arising from the global COVID-19 vaccine drive. This webinar was conducted entirely in English in March 2021.

For more information and similar webinars, please refer to Project SANCHAR's Dashboard, or Harvard T.H. Chan India Research Center's Dashboard

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How do the different COVID-19 vaccines work?

There are currently multiple COVID-19 vaccines being developed, tested and approved. They are all meant to teach the body's immune system to safely recognize and block the coronavirus. The various types include:

- *Inactivated or weakened virus vaccines*, which use a form of the virus that has been inactivated or weakened so it **doesn't cause disease**, but still generates an immune response. For example: COVAXIN.
- *Viral vector vaccines,* which use a genetically engineered virus to carry the genetic code (such as DNA) to generate a protein that prompts an immune response, **without causing COVID-19.** For example: COVISHIELD.
- *mRNA* vaccines, which contain synthetic mRNA, which is information used to make a coronavirus spike protein. **This protein alone cannot cause COVID-19.** Our cell uses this mRNA to make the viral protein which then causes our immune system to make antibodies to fight the virus when it is encountered. For example: PFIZER.

How are vaccines tested?

Possible vaccines go through an intensive testing process. Testing includes careful examination of the vaccine and its ingredients. These tests evaluate the safety of the vaccine and how well it prevents a disease. Tests are first done in research labs, and then if the vaccine looks effective and safe, researchers can apply to do clinical trials. Clinical trials typically involve several thousand healthy volunteer participants in three phases with increasing numbers of participants in each phase. Trials in all phases have to follow strict safety regulations that are set by national regulatory authorities that prioritize participant safety. When vaccine manufacturers apply for approval for their vaccine, the results of all the clinical trials are considered.

If I currently have COVID-19, should I get the vaccine now?

Persons with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection should be in isolation for at least 10 days. They will increase the risk of spreading the virus to others at the vaccination site, hence infected individuals should defer vaccination for 3 months after infection.

Why are people getting infected even after vaccination?

COVID-19 vaccines are effective. However, a small number of vaccinated individuals may still develop infection, but it is likely to be less severe. And hence it is necessary to wear a mask, wash hands and stay away from crowds. Typically, COVID-19 vaccines prevent infection, and even if some small number of people get infected, it is less serious. Vaccination, prevents infection or reduces its severity.

The reasons for why a vaccinated individual may develop COVID-19 infection:

- It's possible a person could have been infected just before or just after vaccination. It typically takes about 2 weeks for the body to build protection after the second dose of vaccination. Thus, a person can get sick if the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 is evolving and new variants of the virus are spreading. Current data suggest that COVID-19 vaccines offer protection against most variants. However, some variants might cause illness in some people after they are fully vaccinated.
- A small percentage of people who are fully vaccinated will still get COVID-19 if they are exposed to the virus that causes it. These are called "vaccine breakthrough cases." This means that while people who have been vaccinated are much less likely to get sick, it may still happen. Experts continue to study how common these cases are.

Even though vaccination will protect most people from getting sick, a small percentage of fully vaccinated people can get infected. There is evidence that vaccination may make illness less severe in people who get vaccinated but still get infected. The overall risk of hospitalization and death among fully vaccinated people will be much lower than among people with similar risk factors who are not vaccinated.

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/effectiveness/why-measure-effectiveness/breakthrough-cases.html

If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, it is advisable to receive the COVID-19 vaccine irrespective of past history of infection with COVID-19. This will help in developing a strong immune response against the disease. It is unclear whether people who have had COVID-19 and recovered will develop enough of an immune response to the illness to protect them from getting COVID-19 again. Even if there is some protection, it is unclear how long it will last. Therefore, it is recommended to receive vaccine even after COVID-19 infection.

Wait for 3 months after recovery from COVID-19 symptoms before getting the vaccine.
For more information, please visit: https://www.mohfw.gov.in/COVID_vaccination/vaccination/faqs.html

Who is eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine?

As of May 1st, 2021, all people over 18 years are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. Please check your local state guidelines for more information.

If you cannot pre-register online, please contact your local government health workers, who will refer you to the government COVID-19 Vaccination Center for on the spot registration, appointment, verification and vaccination on the same day.
For more information, please visit: https://www.mohfw.gov.in/COVID_vaccination/vaccination/faqs.html

For more information and similar frequently asked questions on vaccines, please refer to our English and Hindi COVID-19 dashboards at:
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health – India Research Center
Dashboard in English
Dashboard in Hindi

Project SANCHAR
Dashboard in English
Dashboard in Hindi

Myth-busters

COVID-19 vaccine is a critical tool that will help slow the spread of the coronavirus, prevent infection and ultimately build herd immunity to the disease. Vaccine manufacturers, governments, regulators and health care workers across the world are speeding up the work of developing and deploying new vaccines and medicines, after ensuring their safety and effectiveness, to reduce morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19. Here are some facts debunking the misinformation regarding COVID-19 vaccines in India:

FACT: It is NOT true that the COVID-19 vaccine contains any pig fat/pork gelatin.
Gelatin derived from pigs is used in some live vaccines as a stabilizer to protect live viruses against the effects of temperature, however the COVID-19 vaccines developed and approved in India do NOT contain any pig fat.

FACT: It is NOT true that radiation from 5G lowers our immune system, making us more susceptible to the COVID-19 virus.
5G is a mobile-network technology and there is no scientific evidence that phone signals will either transmit or reduce our defenses to COVID-19.

FACT: It is NOT true that non-human DNA introduced by COVID-19 vaccine will enable humans to pick up traits of animals.
There is no scientific evidence that the mRNA vaccine will introduce non-human/animal DNA into human bodies.

FACT: It is NOT true that doctors encourage COVID-19 vaccine injections through male genitalia.
It is also NOT true that the COVID-19 vaccine will make men infertile. These are baseless claims that bear no merit.

FACT: It is NOT true that the COVID-19 vaccine will cause infertility in women.
The vaccine trials are also being tracked by the World Health Organization and it has found that none of these potential vaccines differentiate between male and female test subjects.

For more myth-busters, please refer to our English and Hindi resources at:
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health – India Research Center
Resources in English and Resources in Hindi

Project SANCHAR
Resources in English and Resources in Hindi

Section 3:

Home-based Management

This section includes shareable infographics on managing COVID-19 at home, from patient and caregiver perspectives, as well as expert advice from a webinar titled "Evidence-based Management & Science Communication for COVID-19".

3

Resources for social media

Tips for Managing COVID-19 at home.

Click to play

Use these tips to keep yourself and your family safe if someone in your household is sick with COVID-19.

For more information, check out: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/ or https://projectsanchar.org/

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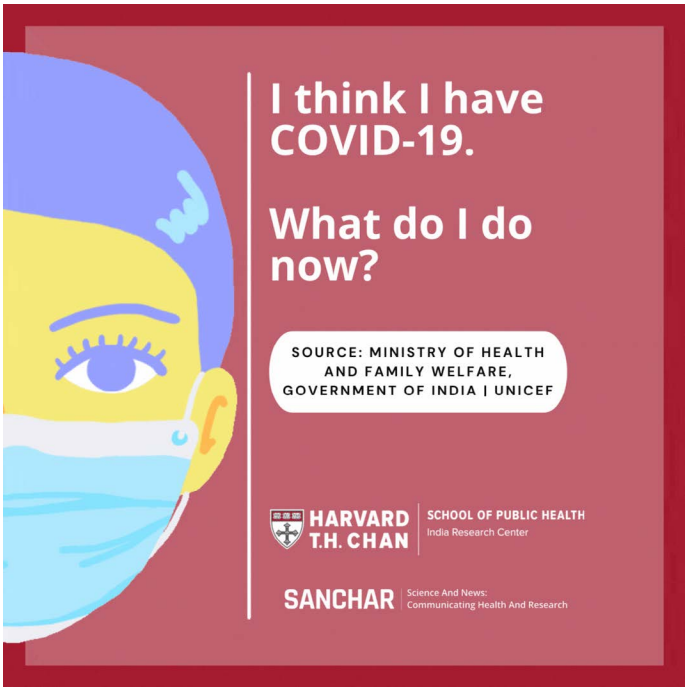

Click to play

If you think you have COVID-19, follow these simple safety tips to stop the spread and keep others safe.

For more information, check out: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/ or https://projectsanchar.org/

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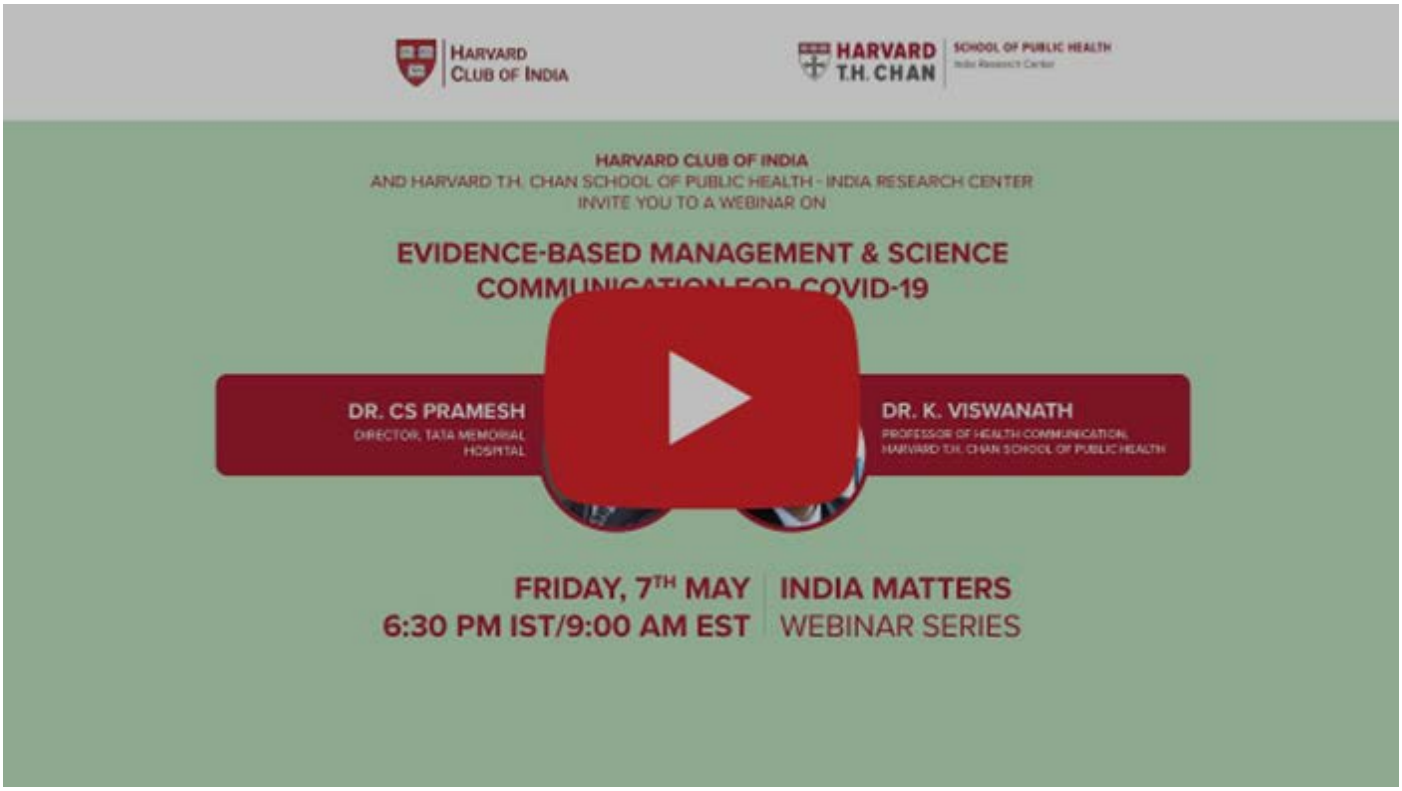
Hear from Experts

Evidence-based Management & Science Communication for COVID-19



This webinar, hosted by the Harvard Club of India, was a part of the series called “India Matters”, and features Dr. C.S. Pramesh, Director of Tata Memorial Hospital and Dr. K. Viswanath, Professor of Health Communication at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. The webinar was opened by Mr. Sanjay Kumar, President Harvard Club of India. During the interactive discussion, which was moderated by Dr. Ananya Awasthi, Secretary, Harvard Club of India, the experts addressed the deluge of misinformation and disinformation on social media channels relating to the ongoing pandemic and discussed strategies to translate the latest evidence base on the clinical management of COVID-19. Dr. Sonali Vaid, Director, Incluve Labs, facilitated the Live Q & A and the webinar was concluded by Dr. Abha Mehndiratta, Vice President, Harvard Club of India. This webinar took place on May 7, 2021.

For more information and similar webinars, please refer to Project SANCHAR’s Dashboard, or Harvard T.H. Chan India Research Center’s Dashboard

Section 4:

Mental Health and Wellbeing

This section includes shareable infographics on maintaining health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health tips for caregivers, and providing mental health support to children through mindful parenting. This section also presents expert advice on strategies for young people coping with their mental health during the pandemic, and discussions on the impact of COVID-19 on children's wellbeing.

4

Resources for social media

Tips for mental, physical, and social wellbeing

The #COVID19 pandemic & the 2nd wave in India have taken an emotional, mental, and physical toll on us all. @Project_SANCHAR & @HarvardChanIRC have compiled a list of tips to help you promote your mental, physical, and social wellbeing.
Follow this thread:

Tips for mental #wellbeing include:

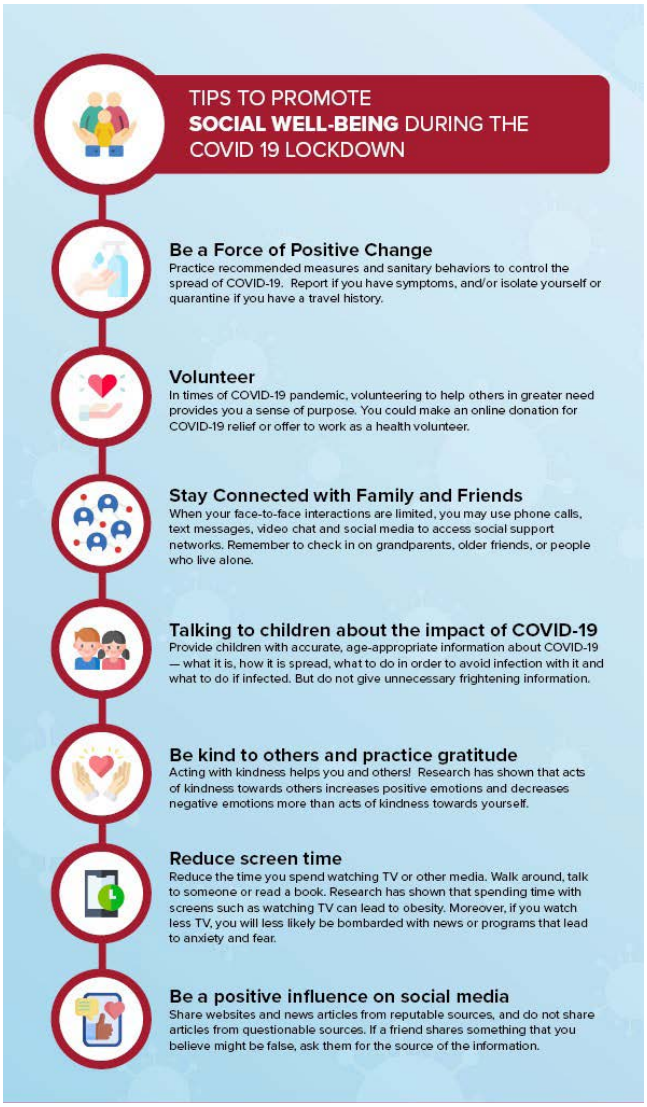
- Practicing mindfulness
- Breathing exercises
- Meditation
- Limiting news consumption
- Mindful use of social media

Read about more tips here: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/mental-well-being/

Along with mental wellbeing, physical health and wellbeing are equally important to maintain overall #health. Tips for physical #wellbeing include:

- Setting a routine
- Exercising
- Healthy eating & sleeping habits

Read more here: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/physical-well-being/



Tips for social wellbeing include:

- Reduce screen time
- Stay virtually connected with friends & family
- Volunteer and help others, if you can
- Be kind

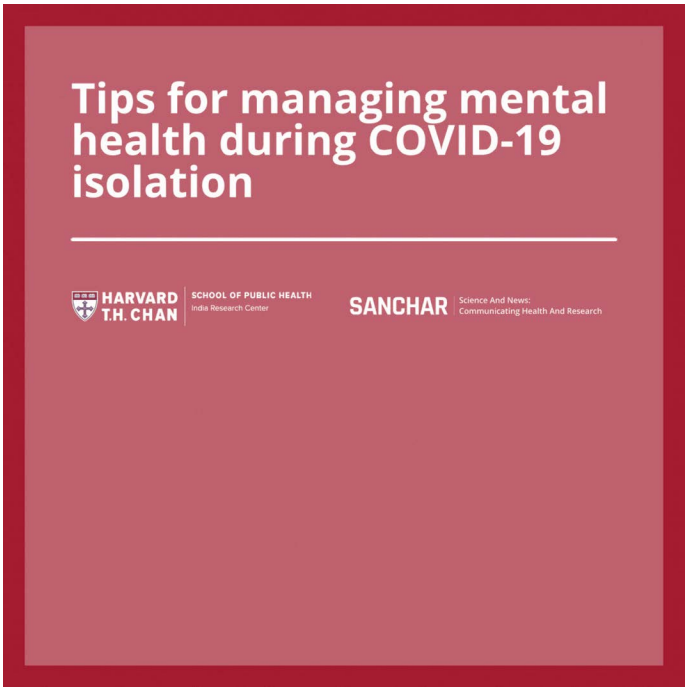
Read more tips that promote social wellbeing here: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/social-well-being/

Visit @Project_SANCHAR's website & @HarvardChanIRC's website for reliable and up to date information, guides, resources, and tools on #COVID19.

https://projectsanchar.org/
https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/

#COVIDFreeIndia

Tips for managing mental health during COVID-19 isolation.



Click to play

Tips for managing mental health during COVID-19 isolation:

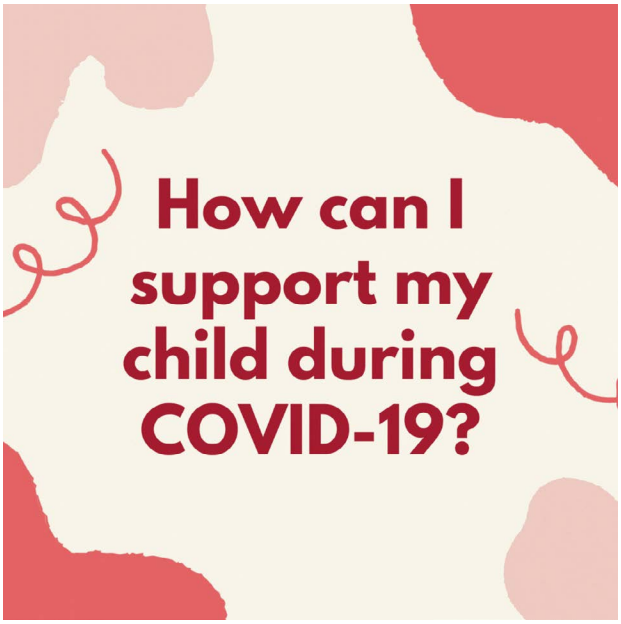
- Explain importance of home isolation
- Limit exposure to media
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Seek support from friends and family

https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/

#COVIDFreeIndia

@HarvardChanIRC @Project_SANCHAR

How can I support my child during COVID-19?

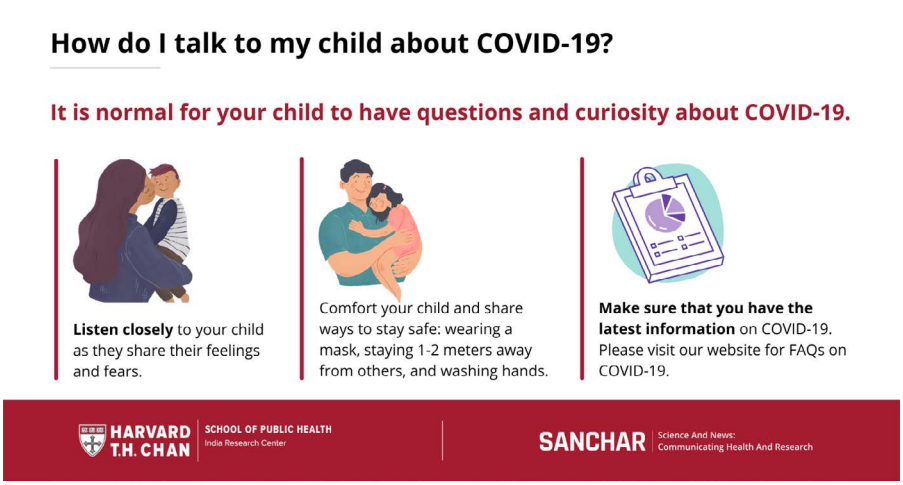


Click to play

Tips to support children during #COVID:
- Spending time with your child
- Being responsive to their emotional needs
- Setting up a daily routine
- Maintaining a healthy diet
- Leading by example!

https://projectsanchar.org/
#COVIDFreeIndia
@HarvardChanIRC @Project_SANCHAR

How do I talk to my child about COVID-19?

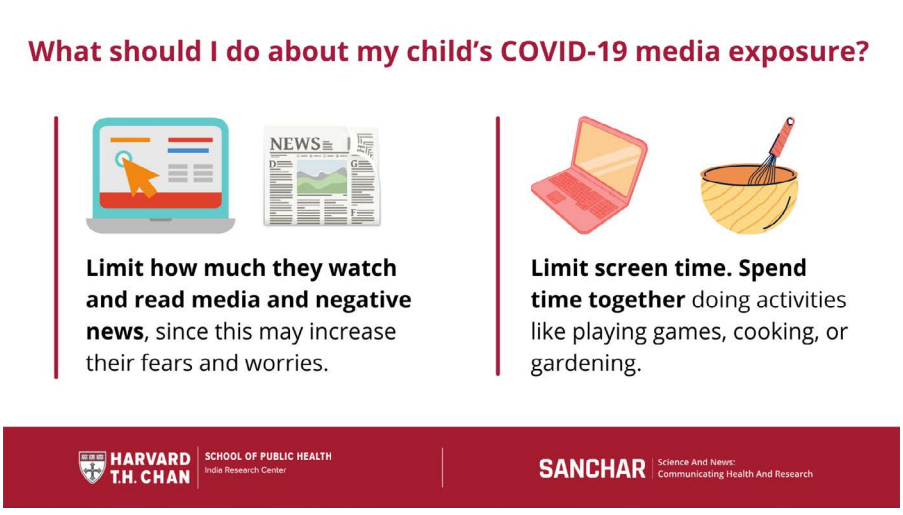


Talk to your children about #COVID:
- Attentively listen to your child
- Fact check & refer to accurate information
- Provide realistic assurance to your about #COVID

https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/
https://projectsanchar.org/

#COVIDFreeIndia
@HarvardChanIRC
@Project_SANCHAR

What should I do about my child's COVID-19 media exposure?



Follow these tips to manage your child's COVID-19 media exposure:
- Limit exposure to media & negative news
- Minimize screen time
- Spend time together
- Participate in indoor activities

https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/

#COVIDFreeIndia
@HarvardChanIRC
@Project_SANCHAR

Hear from Experts

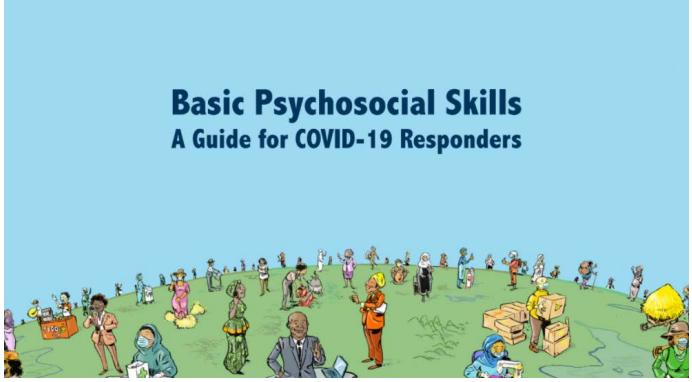
Mental Health and COVID-19: Coping Strategies for Young People

This webinar, co-hosted with the U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai, India, features Dr. Shekhar Saxena, Professor of the Practice of Global Mental Health, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Dr. Elizabeth Levey, Instructor in Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, Ms. Padmini Somani, Founder Director, Salaam Bombay Foundation and Dr. Nimesh G. Desai, Director, Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences. The panelists discussed challenges and coping mechanisms, in the context of mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on younger populations. The webinar was conducted in English and was moderated by Ms. Divya Rajagopal, Senior Assistant Editor, *The Economic Times*. The webinar was held in July 2020.

For more information and similar webinars, please refer to Project SANCHAR's Dashboard, or Harvard T.H. Chan India Research Center's Dashboard

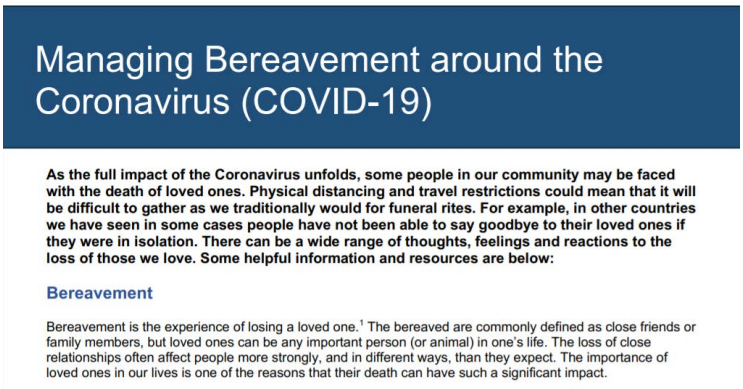
Resources developed by Faculty at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Basic Psychosocial Skills: A Guide for COVID-19 Responders



A resource by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2020. Basic Psychosocial Skills: A guide for COVID-19 responders. *Geneva: World Health Organization*.)

Managing Bereavement around the Coronavirus (COVID-19)



Managing Bereavement around the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

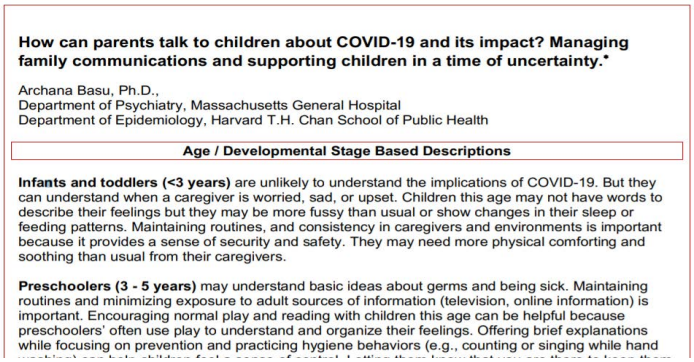
As the full impact of the Coronavirus unfolds, some people in our community may be faced with the death of loved ones. Physical distancing and travel restrictions could mean that it will be difficult to gather as we traditionally would for funeral rites. For example, in other countries we have seen in some cases people have not been able to say goodbye to their loved ones if they were in isolation. There can be a wide range of thoughts, feelings and reactions to the loss of those we love. Some helpful information and resources are below:

Bereavement

Bereavement is the experience of losing a loved one.[1] The bereaved are commonly defined as close friends or family members, but loved ones can be any important person (or animal) in one's life. The loss of close relationships often affect people more strongly, and in different ways, than they expect. The importance of loved ones in our lives is one of the reasons that their death can have such a significant impact.

For further information on "Managing Bereavement around the Coronavirus (COVID-19)" – access this Handout developed by Profs Christy Denckla, PhD, Karestan Koenen, PhD, Harvard School of Public Health, & M. Katherine Shear, MD, Columbia University School of Social Work.

How can parents talk to children about COVID-19 and its impact? Managing family communications and supporting children in a time of uncertainty.



How can parents talk to children about COVID-19 and its impact? Managing family communications and supporting children in a time of uncertainty."

Archana Basu, Ph.D.,
Department of Psychiatry, Massachusetts General Hospital
Department of Epidemiology, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

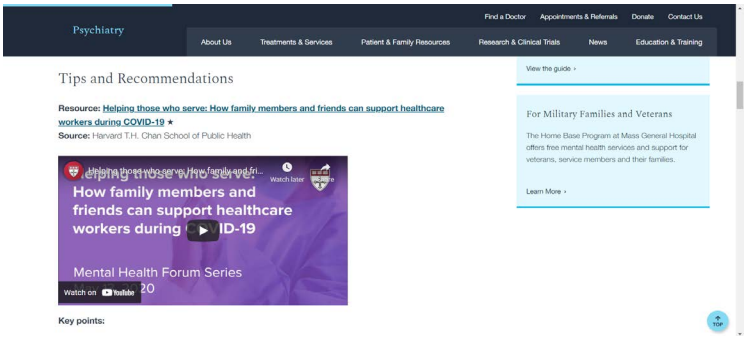
Age / Developmental Stage Based Descriptions

Infants and toddlers (<3 years) are unlikely to understand the implications of COVID-19. But they can understand when a caregiver is worried, sad, or upset. Children this age may not have words to describe their feelings but they may be more fussy than usual or show changes in their sleep or feeding patterns. Maintaining routines, and consistency in caregivers and environments is important because it provides a sense of security and safety. They may need more physical comforting and soothing than usual from their caregivers.

Preschoolers (3 - 5 years) may understand basic ideas about germs and being sick. Maintaining routines and minimizing exposure to adult sources of information (television, online information) is important. Encouraging normal play and reading with children this age can be helpful because preschoolers' often use play to understand and organize their feelings. Offering brief explanations while focusing on prevention and practicing hygiene behaviors (e.g., counting or singing while hand

For further information on "How can parents talk to children about COVID-19 and its impact? Managing family communications and supporting children in a time of uncertainty." – refer to this Handout developed by Dr. Archana Basu, Ph.D., Department of Psychiatry, Massachusetts General Hospital Department of Epidemiology, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

MGH Psychiatry Online Guide to Mental Health Resources



For further information on tips & recommendations to protect the mental health of Health Care Providers – refer to MGH Psychiatry Online Guide to Mental Health Resources , developed by the Department of Psychiatry, Massachusetts General Hospital.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How to maintain mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19?

It is difficult to maintain a healthy lifestyle when we are in the middle of a crisis like this. The uncertainty, and worries related to finances, childcare, elderly parents, and job security disrupt our routines, our lifestyles and mental health. The uncertainty about the future, the ceaseless news coverage and constant social media driven flood of information and misinformation can increase our sense of anxiety. Stress is a normal response to these types of situations. Stress disturbs our sleeping and eating patterns, leads to irritability or emotional outbursts, low motivation, and changes in use of alcohol or other drugs. Please do not hesitate to seek help if you are experiencing anything like this. It is also important to maintain a healthy lifestyle and get back into a routine.

For tips to manage stress and promote your mental, physical and social well-being, click the following:

- Tips for Mental Wellbeing
- Tips for Physical Wellbeing
- Tips for Social Wellbeing

How to manage mental health during COVID-19 isolation?

Discuss the Importance of Home Isolation

- Explain the importance of home isolation to those in your household.
- Set clear expectations on the duration of isolation required.

Set a Schedule

- Set a daily routine, including regular eating and sleeping schedules.
- Take up a new hobby.

Keep Up a Healthy Lifestyle

- Try to continue a healthy lifestyle, including eating well, exercising, and getting good sleep.
- Strongly discourage using alcohol or smoking as a coping strategy.

Seek Social Support

- Reconnect remotely with social networks through phone or other communication channels.

Manage Exposure to Media

- Rely only on credible sources of information, such as the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health- India Research Center or Project SANCHAR dashboards.
- Restrict continuous exposure to negative stories on COVID-19, which may add to stress, anxiety or panic.

Get Additional Help When Needed

- For help with depression, anxiety, or substance abuse, reach out to a mental health professional offered through the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience at 080-46110007

How to maintain the mental health and wellbeing of children during the COVID-19 crisis?

Life in a lockdown due to COVID-19 can be particularly distressing for children. With schools closed, children have been staying indoors, and are far removed from outdoor activities. **Parents are also adjusting to new lifestyles.** Many are working from home, some are facing financial challenges as parents have to attend to their own **economic and psycho-social** needs and at the same time, support the health and wellbeing of their children. While feeling stressed and anxious about the outbreak is natural, the lockdown is also an opportunity to invest in your child. Please see below for some tips to engage your child during COVID-19.

How can I talk to my child about COVID-19?

- It is normal for your child to have questions and curiosity about COVID-19.
- Listen attentively to your child as they share their feelings and fears.
- Provide your child with realistic reassurance, including ways to reduce risk by wearing a mask, staying six feet apart, and washing hands.
- Ensure that you are updated with the latest scientific evidence on COVID-19. Visit https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/ or https://projectsanchar.org/faqs-about-covid-19/ for FAQs on COVID

How can I support my child during COVID-19?

- Use the lockdown to spend time with your child.
- Be responsive to their emotional needs.
- Do not dismiss their COVID-19 concerns and anxieties.
- Set up a predictable daily routine for your child, including regular mealtimes and bedtimes.
- Keep your child healthy and active.
- Lead by example and practice indoor exercises, yoga, mindful breathing, and healthy eating with them.

How Should I Manage my Child's COVID-19 Media Exposure?

- Limit exposure to media and negative news, since this may increase fears and anxiety.
- Minimize screen time and spend time together doing indoor activities like playing games, cooking, or gardening.

When should I seek help?

- If your child shows continued symptoms of heightened stress, anxiety or difficulty sleeping, consider seeking professional help on government's Psychosocial Helpline for Children affected by COVID-19, called *Samvedna*, by dialing "18001212830".
- If any child is in a distress situation, call the "Childline" at "1098" for support.

For more information on Health and Wellbeing, please refer to our English and Hindi COVID-19 dashboards at:

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health – India Research Center
Dashboard in English and Dashboard in Hindi

Project SANCHAR
Dashboard in English and Dashboard in Hindi

Section 5:

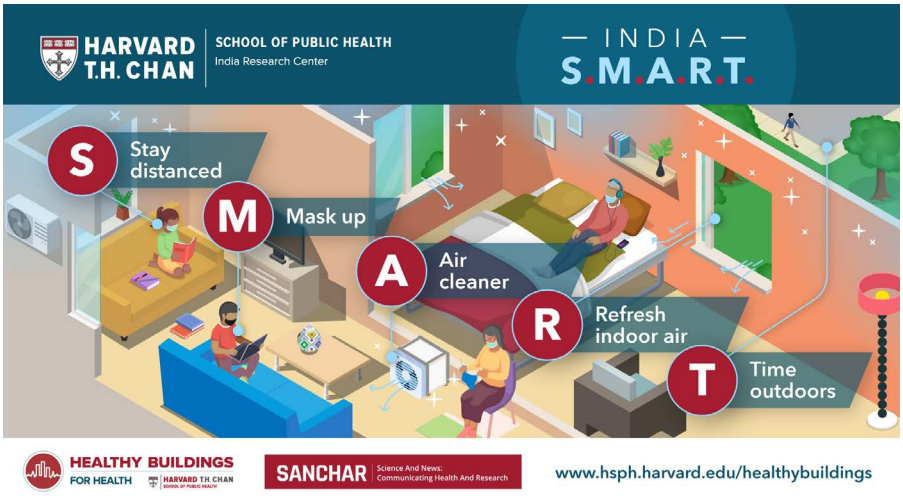
Ventilation and Healthy Buildings

This section includes shareable infographics on the importance of ventilation, masking and healthy buildings, with advice from Dr. Joseph G. Allen, Associate Professor of Exposure Assessment, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

5

Resources for social media

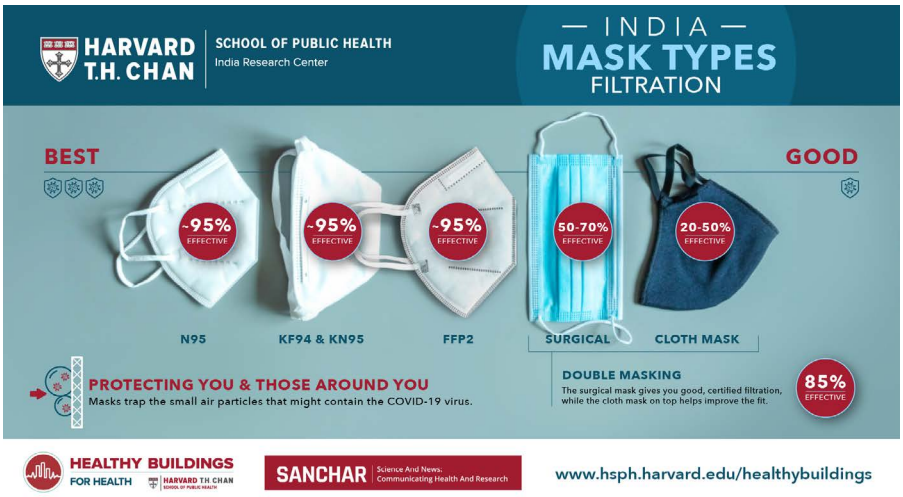
India S.M.A.R.T



Be SMART and protect yourself and others around you.
Stay Distanced.
Mask up.
Air cleaner.
Refresh indoor air.
Time outdoors.
IndiaSMART is India Protected.

#HealthyBuildings #COVIDFreeIndia @HarvardChanIRC @Project_SANCHAR @j_g_allen https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/

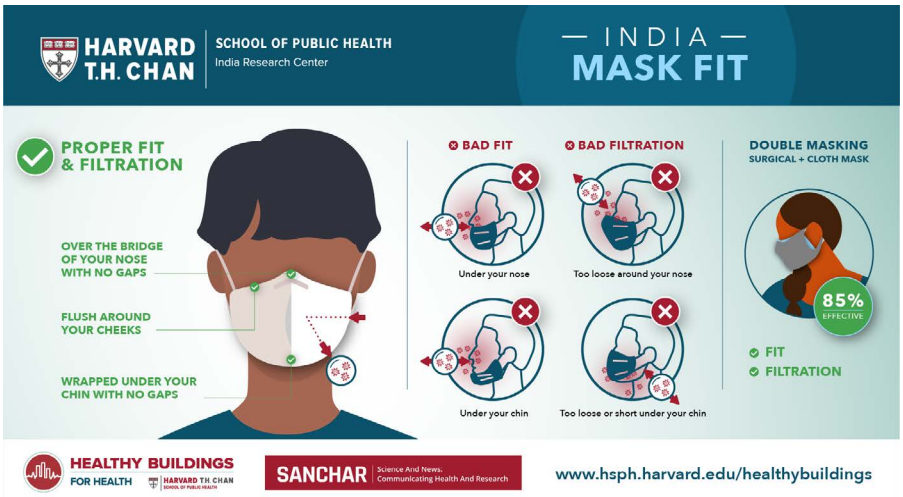
Mask types by filtration



Masks trap the small air particles that might contain the COVID-19 virus. Protect yourself and others by wearing your mask(s) and encouraging your friends and family to do the same! #KnowYourMask

#COVIDFreeIndia #HealthyBuildings @HarvardChanIRC @Project_SANCHAR @j_g_allen

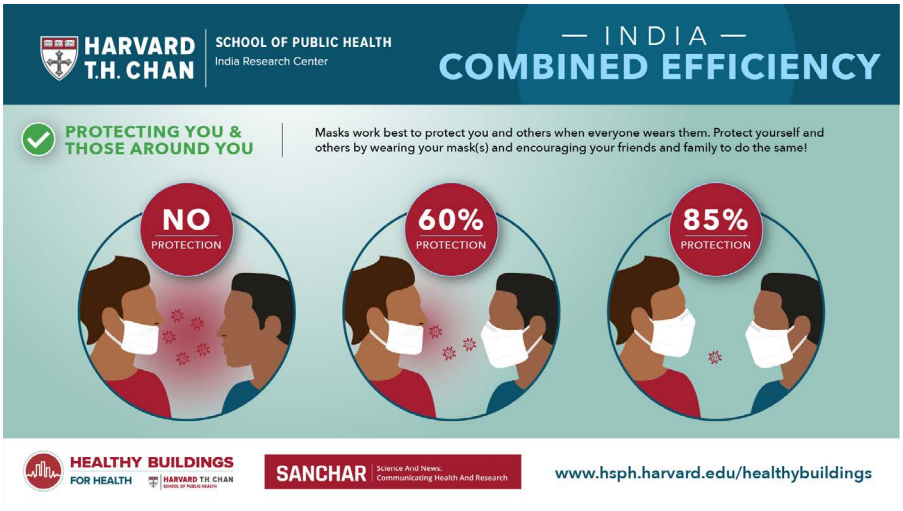
How to wear a mask



Understand how masks should fit for best protection. Protect yourself and others by wearing your mask(s) and encouraging your friends and family to do the same!

#KnowYourMask #COVIDFreeIndia #HealthyBuildings @HarvardChanIRC @Project_SANCHAR @j_g_allen https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/

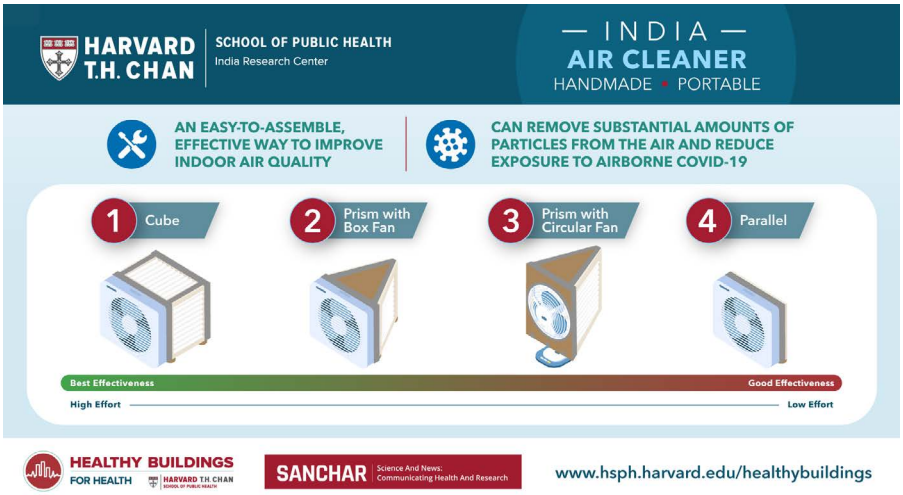
Importance of wearing masks



Masks work best to protect you and others when everyone wears them. Protect yourself and others by wearing your mask(s) and encouraging your friends and family to do the same!

#MasksWork #COVIDFreeIndia
#HealthyBuildings
@HarvardChanIRC
@Project_SANCHAR
@j_g_allen

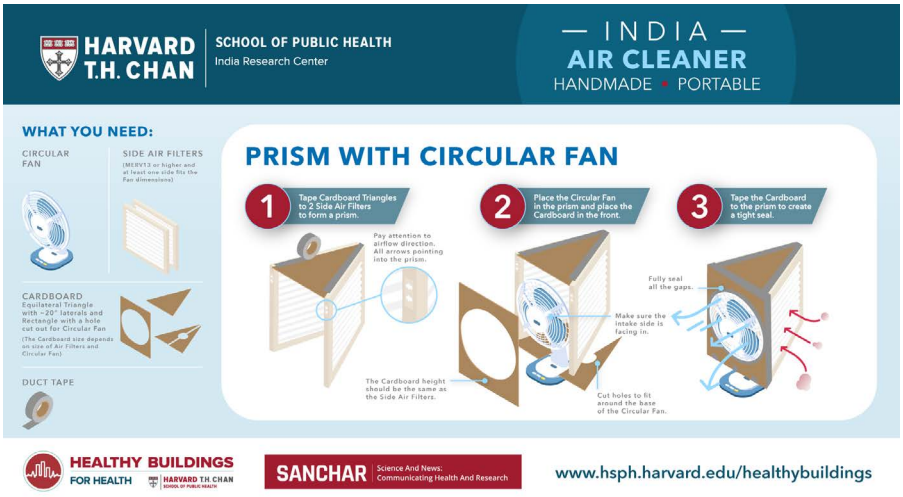
Types of handmade and portable air cleaners you can make



Filters can remove substantial amounts of particles from the air and reduce exposure to airborne COVID-19. You can make one for your room and protect yourself and your household members.

#COVIDFreeIndia
#HealthyBuildings
@HarvardChanIRC
@Project_SANCHAR
@j_g_allen

How to make a circular fan air cleaner



Reduce your indoor exposure to COVID-19. Learn how to make a portable do-it-yourself prism air cleaner with a circular fan to remove contaminants such as viruses from the air.

#COVIDFreeIndia
#HealthyBuildings
@HarvardChanIRC
@Project_SANCHAR
@j_g_allen

Section 6:

Guide for Women and Children

This section includes shareable infographics on breastfeeding guidelines for COVID-19 positive mothers and expert advice on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on children's wellbeing.

6

Resources for social media

Can COVID-19 positive mothers breastfeed their children?

Breastfeeding your child is important. Check out the infographic below on how to safely breastfeed your child even when you have COVID-19.
For more information, check out: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/ or https://projectsanchar.org/

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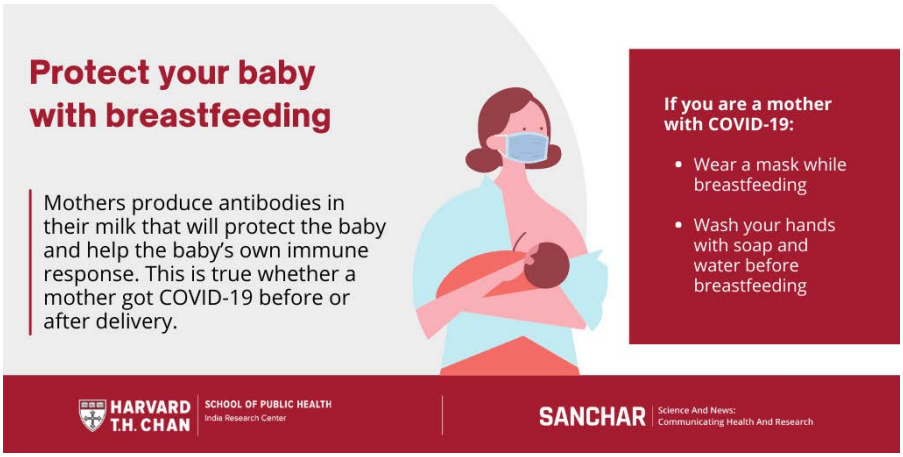
Importance of continued breastfeeding for COVID-19 positive mothers



Continued breastfeeding for COVID-19 positive mothers is important and recommended. Check out how breastfeeding can keep your baby safe from COVID-19.
For more information, check: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/ https://projectsanchar.org/

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A tip to help mothers breastfeed if their baby is too sick

Here is a tip in the event the baby is too sick to be breastfed. If this is the case seek medical advice. For more information, check out: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/ or https://projectsanchar.org/

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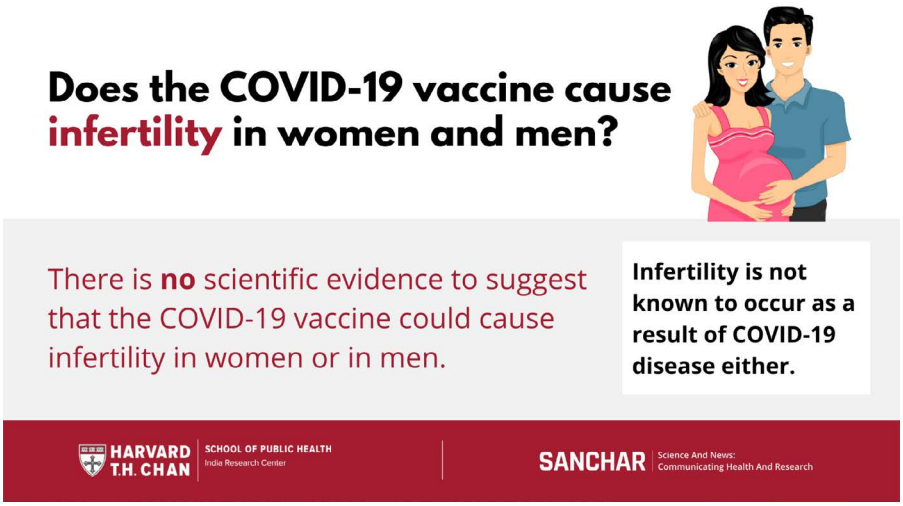
Does COVID-19 vaccine cause infertility in men and women?



COVID-19 vaccines have been thoroughly tested and are safe and effective. Infertility is not a known side effect of the vaccines.
For more information, check out: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/india-center/covid-19-dashboard/ or https://projectsanchar.org/

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@Project_SANCHAR

Hear from experts

Impact of the COVID19 outbreak on the Health and Well being of Children

This webinar, co-hosted with the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), features Dr. Karestan C. Koenen, Professor of Psychiatric Epidemiology, Department of Epidemiology, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Dr. Archana Basu, Clinical Psychologist, Massachusetts General Hospital and Research Scientist at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, and Dr. Shekhar Seshadri, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Associate Dean of Behavioural Sciences, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS). The panelists discussed COVID-19 and its adverse impact on child health as well as strategies to address the challenges children have faced during the pandemic. This webinar was moderated by Dr. Ananya Awasthi and was conducted in English. The webinar was held in May 2020.

For more information and similar webinars, please refer to Project SANCHAR's Dashboard, or Harvard T.H. Chan India Research Center's Dashboard

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Is it safe for me to get the vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

At present, there are no data available on vaccination with Covishield or Covaxin for pregnant women, because pregnant women have been excluded from these vaccine clinical trials. Experts are determining safety for pregnant women through studies on women who were part of clinical trials and later became pregnant. Currently the MoHFW does not advise women who are pregnant or not sure of their pregnancy to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

The MoHFW recommends COVID-19 vaccination for all lactating women.

Source: https://www.mohfw.gov.in/covid_vaccination/vaccination/faqs.html

Can the COVID-19 vaccine cause infertility in men or women?

There is no scientific evidence to suggest that the COVID-19 vaccine could cause infertility in women or in men. Infertility is not known to occur as a result of COVID-19 disease either.

For more information on how to maintain the mental health and wellbeing of children during the COVID-19 crisis, please check Section 4: Mental Health and Wellbeing.

For more information and similar frequently asked questions, please refer to our English and Hindi COVID-19 dashboards at:

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health – India Research Center
Dashboard in English
Dashboard in Hindi

Project SANCHAR
Dashboard in English
Dashboard in Hindi

Section 7:

Acknowledgements and References

7

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Viswanath Lab, the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, and the Health Communication Core at the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center for their support and guidance during the development of these resources.

We are drawing this information from the websites of a variety of trustworthy organizations (e.g. World Health Organization (WHO), the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, (MoHFW) Government of India, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) among others). Some of this language is used word for word, and other language is paraphrased. We would like to acknowledge the hard work of these organizations in compiling this information.

We are also grateful to the following faculty and their teams from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Massachusetts General Hospital*:

- Dr. Joseph G. Allen, Associate Professor of Exposure Assessment Science and Director, Harvard Healthy Buildings Program, and the Harvard Healthy Buildings Program team
- Dr. Karestan Koenen, Professor of Psychiatric Epidemiology, Department of Epidemiology, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
- Dr. Archna Basu, Clinical Psychologist, Massachusetts General Hospital and Research Scientist, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health
- Dr. Shekhar Saxena, Professor of the Practice of Global Mental Health, Department of Global Health and Population, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health
- Dr. Barry Bloom, Joan L. and Julius H. Jacobson Research Professor of Public Health and Former Dean, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
- Dr. Elizabeth Levey, Instructor in Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School

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*The faculty do not bear responsibility for any possible errors in the toolkit.

Section 8:

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The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health - India Research Center is the first global Center of the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health. Established in 2015, the Center has three strategic goals of research, teaching, and translation of evidence into policies and programs. The Center provides a platform to facilitate faculty exchange and partnership between public health researchers and Harvard Chan faculty. The Center is led by Prof. K. Viswanath, Lee Kum Kee Professor of Health Communication at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health.

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Project SANCHAR, or Science and News: Communicating Health And Research, is aimed at building the capacity of journalists to draw on the latest science and data for shaping public knowledge, attitudes and policy on health.

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