



Bouncing Back To Work-Life – An Overview on Post-Covid Management!!

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The pandemic disease has affected many countries all over the globe. The ailment mimics various universal illnesses along with peculiar signs and symptoms. Including a high fatality rate, it has also disturbed the dispatch of other diseases thus obstructing the frail health system in India. An effort to vaccinate a majority of the population. The use of non-pharmaceutical preventive measures has been scaled to prevent further decline. The protocols for nutritional management take into account features of the pandemic, along with the condition and need of the patients. Hopefully, the instructions outlined here will help improve health care around the world.

KEYWORDS: Pandemic, Diet, Sleep, Healthy Lifestyle

INTRODUCTION

Microbes present in the environment can be described as ‘microscopic organisms’ that exists as single cell, many cells, or as clusters of cells. They are universal and are healthful to life, except for some which can cause major harm. Majorly they are bacteria, archaea, fungi, protozoa, algae, and viruses.¹

A virus is an infectious organism that duplicates only inside the cells of a living organism.¹ They are known as “organisms at the edge of life”, since they possess genes, evolve by natural selection, and reproduce by creating multiple copies of themselves through self-assembly. Viruses make use of a host cell to make new products since they do not have their metabolism, thus they cannot naturally reproduce outside a host cell.¹

COVID-19 induced by a severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 has been announced by the World Health Organisation as a pandemic on 11th March 2020. These viruses are essentially responsible for enzootic infections in animals and are also suited to transfer it to humans and cause infections identical to SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV.²

The method of spread of the virus is via a cough or a sneeze from an infected person that leaves small droplets in the air or even by stool. Inhalation of these droplets or contact of the infected surfaces may further get infected.^{4,5} The patient presents with symptoms such as fever, cough, headache, fatigue, muscle/body ache, loss of taste/smell, sore throat, nausea and

diarrhoea.⁴

In case of a mild disease like fever, cough, sore throat it is important to isolate in a well-ventilated room with arrangements of online/ telephonic consultation with a doctor. In case of severe disease such as difficulty in breathing, and persistent high fever it is recommended that medical advice be sought as well as self-care be emphasized.⁴

Presently, no cure for the disease is available. Thus, alternative methods to control the spread of the virus need to be followed.

A healthy immune system is vital for shielding us from a number of diseases, and one way to accomplish this is a balanced diet. Nutrition has a positive impact as it might be a way to support older people at higher risk and people with pre-existing conditions. The importance of a good diet has gained more significance, with viruses such as COVID-19 having ravaged the globe.

A NEED TO TAKE CARE!

The disastrous virus has devastated homes, lowered immunity levels while inducing weakness in ill-bodies. If the microbial infection was moderate to severe, some harm to the respiratory system might have occurred. Furthermore, people with mild infection have to be watchful in the post-infection stage as manifestations of other health conditions set by the virus may surface.



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The body becomes weak after having battled the dangerous virus for so many days.

Even if our body has killed off all the viruses, we need to shower ourself with a lot of love and care. This will ensure that complete healing takes place and in case of any requirement for additional healthcare checks, the right action at the right time can be taken.

Recuperating from Covid generally takes around two weeks for mild cases and about a month for people with serious infection. A superior recovery rate is seen explaining the reason for a sooner recovery and a slow get back to the old lifestyle after contracting this infection.

Every effort to beat the virus, WHO and the government urge the community to support recovery efforts by boosting their immunity. Here are certain reminders on how to keep the virus at bay.⁶⁻¹⁰

1. Take rest: Staying isolated for another seven days even if the symptoms disappear has been suggested by many doctors, as some studies have found that, the virus may still linger in the body. Give a week of complete rest after recovery since a well-rested body can focus on healing. Enough sleep is essential. Too much work, stress, and anxiety will make the body ill.

2. A nutritious diet: Food eases the path to recovery. The most crucial need of our body is energy. The right kind of food will help gain strength back in days.

NOW IT'S ON IMMUNITY!!!

Keeping the immune system healthy is the key to preventing, fighting infection. Basic good health is the key to immunity.

Eat – Local, Seasonal, Traditional

A balanced diet includes plenty of proteins and carbohydrates. Proteins repair the body while carbohydrates take the least effort on our metabolism. Healthy fats help in boosting the immune response to pathogens by decreasing inflammation.

Whole grains, semolina are rich sources of carbs. Bread and cereals also provide easy-to-digest options. Below are certain points to be followed:

- Intake of small frequent meals.
- Choosing proteins (paneer, egg) in adjunct with a fruit
- Having medication post meals.

- Considerable hydration along with milk, juice, chaas, and smoothies.

- Peanut butter sandwich, parantha, Nuts, and seeds also provide energy.

- Healthy oils and fats - olive oil can be added to a fruit salad and peanuts to curd. Once strength is regained, going back to the normally added fat is recommended. Proteins are the building blocks of our bodies. Muscle mass during illness needs to be replenished thus addition of proteins to every meal is critical to rebuild the body. Depleted proteins also mean lowered immunity. Spreading the intake of proteins through the day will help to utilize it.

- Egg/paneer for breakfast, dal for lunch, and chicken or soy nuggets for dinner is a good option.

- For snacks, a combination of carbs and protein, helps the protein be utilized for its primary function - cheese with fruits, dry fruits with nuts, curd with fruits.

- Probiotics protect our body - consumption of at least 600 ml a day proves beneficial.

A talk to the nutritionist for a supplement that will help tide over in case of a difficulty in eating.

While discharge, the doctor recommends having certain vitamins and mineral supplements for a period. Also, the same vitamins should be consciously included in daily meals to enhance recovery.

Vitamin C is a strong antioxidant specific to lung health. Few good sources being citrus fruits, tomato, spinach, papaya, mango, kiwi and strawberries. It is a water-soluble vitamin, consumption of adequate amounts daily is a must.

Zinc is an important nutrient that strengthens immune health. It is advised to stick to the prescribed amount. Some sources include Rajma, Lobia, Chana, almonds, Pumpkin seeds, Chicken, Milk, and Cheese.

Vitamin D also serves as a hormone and affects the immune system closely. A positive correlation between Vitamin D and better COVID outcomes has been found. Absorbing sunshine is the best source. Soak in early morning sunshine for a minimum of 20 minutes or a division of the same into two or three exposures. Furthermore, sunlight releases Nitric Oxide from our skin stores which is beneficial and protective to heart health.

Certain immune boosting foods include – olive oil, elder berries, turmeric, ginger, garlic, green tea, tulsi,

ashwagandha, brahmi, ginseng, giloy, and other immunonutrients, nuts, oats, oregano.¹¹

3. Exercise a little every day: Exercising though unappealing is essential for a speedy recovery. Regular exercise improves the health of every organ in the body. Working out improves blood and oxygen circulation. It detoxifies the body, improves quality of sleep and immunity. Moreover, it helps the brain to produce more happiness hormones. Regular exercise enables the immune system to generate more antibodies. Swimming, running or normal cardio can help fight against COVID-19 in a way that the chances of hospitalization and death are lowered. 10 minutes a day will suffice.

4. Quit smoking: Smokers are at a higher risk of acquiring COVID-19 as the process of smoking involves contact of a finger to the lips. This raises the chances of transmission of viruses from hand to mouth. Smoking hookah or shisha also involves sharing of mouthpieces and hoses. Switch to nicotine replacement therapy such as nicotine gum, patches, lozenges, nasal inhalers to kick the habit.

5. Lose weight: Being overweight is associated with poor immune functions. Overweight people are more prone to develop metabolic syndrome and diabetes, thus compromising immunity. Excess body weight creates excess fatty cells which create inflammatory proteins that desensitize the immune system. It also causes inflammation and increases chances for a blood clot- all of which can worsen COVID-19.

6. Play a few memory games: COVID is known to damage brain and neural cells. To prevent future memory problems, playing some memory games like sudoku, mathdoku, crossword, jigsaw, etc. will help while away the time without getting bored and irritated.

7. Monitor blood oxygen level: Continuous monitoring of blood oxygen saturation levels even after recovering from COVID, can indicate lung damage that we don't know of. If so, the oxygen level will fluctuate and dip below 90.

8. Lesser the stress, the higher the immunity: Stress weakens the immune system as the ability to fight off antigens is reduced, making us prone to infections. To curb stress, regular exercise, a balanced diet, relaxation techniques, avoiding long working hours, setting realistic goals and expectations.

9. Welcoming negative thoughts⁸ Being in distress or thinking negatively about possible situations can be painful. It induces and raises apprehension and fear levels finally influencing health.

Few approaches to lower worrying involve:

- Writing down uneasiness and their likely consequences. Looking at a situation and thinking about good likely points. Giving positive affirmations will help cope up.
- Explore facts about one's prognosis and their likely outcomes.
- Talking to a buddy.
- Reading, walking, or binge watching.

10. Watch out for other symptoms: COVID can have long-term consequences on health. It can cause both lung and heart damage. Any experience of shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, warm flushes, should be consulted with a doctor right away.

COVID care is essential and should not be ignored. This is a great investment for future health!

A SARS-CoV-2 virus consists of a lipid outer layer which protects the inner content of the virus thus a soap or an alcohol- based sanitizer works effectively in dissolving this lipid layer and damages the inner content of the virus. Hence the ability to enter a human cell is diminished. This proves the essentiality of regular washing hands or a constant use of a sanitizer.

CONCLUSION

We are at COVID related risks because of-

- Pollution
- Poor investment in public health
- No social distancing

Our health is interlinked with economy and ecology. Eating local and seasonal is good for both the health of the people and of the planet. Regulate junk food as comorbidities make things worse.

Common sense is greater than panic and fear. Let positivity prevail in the mind and air. The perception of security from the virus makes us take great risks (Peltzman effect). Use of masks, hand wash, and sanitizers must be carried out judiciously even if we are vaccinated.

In addition to these diet tips, nutrients necessary for health should also be consumed. Since recovery takes

time, a need to eat, rest as well as setting aside all the bad experiences is the key to becoming truly healthy. As rightly said “When diet is wrong medicine is of no use and when diet is correct medicine is of no need”.

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