

Prof. (Dr.) Vikas Bhatia Executive Director,
All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bibinagar, Telangana
Talks about hybrid immunity, and how it affects our antibodies.

Ask The Doctor: What Is Hybrid Immunity? Do People Who Have Been Vaccinated After COVID Infection Have It?



Prof. (Dr.) Vikas Bhatia, Executive Director at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bibinagar, Telangana.

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● NEWS18.COM

● LAST UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 19, 2021, 16:45 IST

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A year and a half after the Coronavirus pandemic wrecked our collective lives, our society has been grappling with fear and insecurity. As a result, we have seen misinformation spread like wildfire, and many resorting to bizarre and incorrect methods of dealing with the virus. With this column, which will be published every Sunday, we aim to address any health or vaccine-related question our readers might have about the [coronavirus](#) pandemic.

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Why are some countries like Cuba vaccinating kids as young as two years old?

Children in Latin American countries have lost four times as many school days as other children worldwide, as per UNICEF reports. Schools in the island nation are being carried out virtually, where children are asked to watch educational programmes on television for the last 1.5 years. Uninterrupted internet facility is hardly available in every home.

Gallbladder gangrenes happen due to severe inflammation of the gall bladder followed by the death of tissue. Most commonly, they occur in gallbladders which have gallstones. But you are at higher risk of acalculous cholecystitis (inflammation without stones) when there is suppressed immunity or severe injury. This is what is happening in the case of people with a history of COVID 19. They present with typical symptoms of fever, nausea and upper quadrant pain in the abdomen.

What is gallbladder Gangrene? Why are patients recovering from COVID facing it?

Gallbladder gangrenes happen due to severe inflammation of the gall bladder followed by the death of tissue. Most commonly, they occur in gallbladders which have gallstones. But you are at higher risk of acalculous cholecystitis (inflammation without stones) when there is suppressed immunity or severe injury. This is what is happening in the case of people with a history of COVID 19. They present with typical symptoms of fever, nausea and upper quadrant pain in the abdomen.

Typically, those patients who have had some or other form of comorbidities, steroid use and recovering from COVID are facing it because the high level of inflammation is fueling it up due to the virus attack. Experts also say that after lungs, the gastrointestinal tract has the highest number of ACE 2 receptors to which the virus binds to. So, it's very important to look out for the warning symptoms to be able to start immediate medications.

Are there medicines to deal with COVID fatigue? Should people who witness COVID fatigue not go to work?

Fatigue is a common feature towards recovery after every viral illness. COVID fatigue, however, is more exhausting and severe. So, it's more important to follow safety protocols to avoid superadded infections; go easy on exercise by taking up light workouts and frequent rests, nutritious diets, hydration and mental relaxation. Avoiding work altogether might create an overall imbalance and hamper the road to recovery. Instead, taking things lightly, one day at a time and with pauses, will do better.

Does COVID 19 impair our cognitive abilities in the long run? How so?

The gathering evidence suggests that there might be mild brain damage directly by encephalitis among the COVID survivors causing subtle cognitive, behavioural and psychological problems. But, remarkably, few reports have suggested a lack of oxygen as the reason, although their autopsies did not show any such signs of brain injury.

What is hybrid immunity? Do people who have received vaccines after recovering from COVID infection have such kind of immunity?

The combination of natural immunity from infection and immunity from a vaccine triggers memory cells, resulting in robust type protection. This is much stronger than just infection or vaccination alone and is called herd/superhuman immunity

What kind of exercise regimen should be followed post-recovery?

It very much depends on the association of particular diseases, if any. So, rest for 3 - 4 weeks post-COVID until the respiratory symptoms subside and gradually start with low-intensity exercises, focusing on breath monitoring. It's very important to focus on doing what you can handle and thus, starting slow is the best option.