

COVID19: Myth vs. Facts

COVID-19 in children is often asymptomatic and seldom requires hospitalization: Dr. V. K. Paul, Member, NITI Aayog

Healthy children recovered with mild illness without need for hospitalization as compared to those who either had comorbidities or low immunity: Dr. Randeep Guleria, Director AIIMS, New Delhi

Covaxin trials have been started on children aged between 2 – 18 years: Dr. N. K. Arora, Chairperson of the COVID-19 Working Group of NTAGI

Detailed guidelines on 'Management of COVID-19 in children (below 18 years)' issued by Union Health Ministry

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Government of India has been at the forefront of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccination forms an integral component of the five-point strategy of Government of India to fight the pandemic (including Test, Track, Treat and COVID Appropriate Behaviour).

During the COVID-19 second wave in the country, several questions have been raised in the media regarding higher vulnerability of children to get adversely impacted by COVID-19 during the subsequent waves, if any.

Experts have allayed these fears and apprehensions on several platforms.

Dr. V. K. Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog at the Union Health Ministry's media briefing on COVID-19 on 1st June 2021 had informed that adequate arrangements are being made in terms of healthcare infrastructure in order to provide effective care and treatment to children who may get

infected. He had further said that COVID-19 in children is often asymptomatic and seldom requires hospitalization. However, it is possible that a small percentage of children who get infected may need hospitalization

(<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1723469>)



During the media briefing on COVID-19 held on 8th June 2021, Dr. Randeep Guleria, Director, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) New Delhi stated that there is no data, either from India or globally, to show that children will be seriously infected in subsequent waves. Giving further clarification on the issue he said that healthy children recovered with mild illness without need for hospitalization while the ones admitted in the hospital due to COVID19 infection during the second wave in India either had co-morbidities or low immunity (<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1725366>)

Dr N K Arora, Chairperson of the COVID-19 Working Group of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI) had stated on 25th June 2021 that Covaxin trials have been started on children aged between 2 – 18 years and the results for the same will be received by September to October this year. He said that children may catch the infection, but they will not get seriously ill.

(<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1730219>)

Keeping in mind the preparedness that is required to keep the children safe and healthy during subsequent COVID-19 waves, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued guidelines for 'Management of COVID-19 in children (below 18 years) on 18th June 2021. The document provides detailed guidance on symptoms, various treatments, monitoring and management including Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), advice for using masks etc.

(<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/GuidelinesforManagementofCOVID19inCHILDREN18June2021final.pdf>)

The Union Health Ministry and various experts have regularly emphasised the need for COVID Appropriate Behaviour (CAB) for children as well as adults to break the chain of transmission of the virus.

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