

A simple Guide to staying healthy during this Third Wave!

Stay Calm and Do Not Panic

Version dt 21 Jan 2022

Disclaimer: The content of this Advisory Note is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your allopathic medical doctor or other qualified health provider for any questions you may have regarding any medical condition.

The content below is only for informational purposes.

Background

In India, we crested the second wave of our COVID pandemic in May- June 2021 and are now going through the third wave. We are also facing new variants with higher infectiousness, thereby affecting transmission amongst people, even those vaccinated. Among these variants, it was first the Delta variant and now the Omicron variant that is causing sleepless nights for many with its inroads across the world.

Be assured, these are not new viruses, just different forms of the coronavirus as it evolves slowly.

We must accept that the pandemic has established itself now, and is spreading rapidly across communities. ***We all are at risk of being infected by a coronavirus variant, either now, or eventually.***

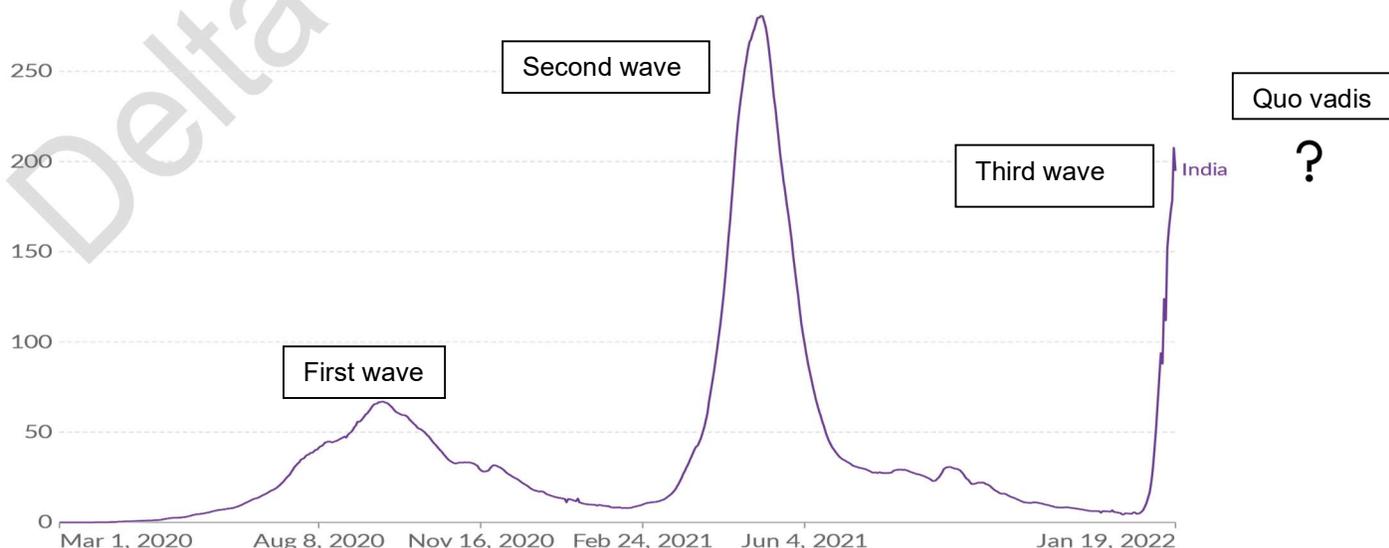
We must also understand that each country has its own waves, depending on transmission and other population dynamics. These waves need not necessarily parallel other countries in timeframe.

Pandemic Waves : India

Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people

7-day rolling average. Due to limited testing, the number of confirmed cases is lower than the true number of infections.

Our World in Data



Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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Scientific evidence over the past two years has irrefutably proven that **COVID Appropriate Behaviour works!**

Keep in mind that though the actions required are the same, “**Isolation**” is for infected cases, and “**Quarantine**” is for exposed contacts.

*We must be mindful about issues of **stigma** and **discrimination**, as everyone can potentially get infected, irrespective of all precautions being taken.*

“Do unto others as you would want them to do unto you”.

Be supportive of others especially those who have a case in their family, while taking all required precautions. You never know when you yourself may need the assistance and support of others.

About vaccine effectiveness as on 21 Jan 2022

While vaccines may not be as effective against Omicron and newer variants that may emerge in the future, being vaccinated and also receiving a booster wherever indicated, definitely does provide protection against serious illness! Do note that even if fully vaccinated, you can still acquire and transmit infection to others, its just that you will most likely not have serious illness if infected.

Don't hesitate, vaccinate! When due, get booster too!

What to do, to avoid being infected by the Coronavirus & variants?

1. **Avoid the C's**

- (a) **Avoid Crowded Places and Crowds** - Practice physical distancing strictly.
- (b) **Avoid Close Contact Settings** – especially where people have close range conversations. Talk with friends, outdoors. Keep your distance while conversing.
- (c) **Avoid Confined and Closed Spaces** – i.e those with limited ventilation. Open those windows, allow for natural air circulation.

2. **Regular hand washing**

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or use sanitizer liberally (when soap and water is not available). *Avoid touching your hands to your face.*

3. **Wearing face masks when in public areas:**

Any mask is better than no mask. You must wear a mask in any situation where you will be 'close' (in physical proximity) to other people. *“I protect you, You protect me”.*

About testing as on 20 Jan 2022

Asymptomatic individuals or low risk contacts of cases, without co-morbidities need not be tested. There is no need for testing at the end of isolation.

Do not get tested indiscriminately.

What preparations must Societies make to respond to the third wave of the COVID 19 pandemic?

4. It is recommended that the Management Committee of the Society convene a special online meeting, to review SOPs and authorize funds for periodic procurement of all required disinfection supplies and PPE components for staff. It is time to now check the functional status of all foot operated sanitizer dispensers, IR thermometers and pulse oxymeters procured earlier.

5. Management Committees must review their SOPs and suitably modify as the pandemic evolves. **Don't wait for the next wave!** Review the local Standard Operating Procedures for cleaning in your Society :-

- (i) Wet mopping of *common areas at least once a day*,
- (ii) Disinfection of *common high contact surface areas* such as lift panels and common door handles at least twice a day.
- (iii) **DO NOT** spray chemicals in the air or indiscriminately on all surfaces.
- (iv) In view of the continuing **dengue threat**, it is also advisable to do a weekly Aedes mosquito breeding site search and destroy campaign with the participation of all residents.

6. It is emphasized that there is **no requirement for any surface spraying or 'disinfection' of households or human beings**. This is illegal and harmful, and has also been discussed in the Supreme Court in Sep 2020 to be banned in compliance with earlier issued MOHFW guidelines. **Do not** waste money in getting common areas or houses sprayed or 'sanitized' on occurrence of cases. *It will be of more harm to residents and the environment.*

7. Every week, **reinforce COVID Appropriate Behaviour messages** for residents, security guards and housekeeping staff. Promote healthy practices amongst staff, such as covering mouth appropriately while coughing, and not spitting indiscriminately.

Vaccination Campaign

8. The single *most effective intervention available to us today, is vaccination*. Societies are advised to arrange for special drives to ensure that the second dose of vaccine is provided to all domestic assistants, housekeeping staff, security guards. A coordinated drive is essential at the Society level, to ensure coverage of this vital population who impact our daily life. **Do not leave it to individual efforts**, as there are many barriers that people face to get vaccinated, even if willing. For those who are hesitant to get vaccinated, please intervene by providing all required information to overcome such hesitancy. *Reassurance and not enforcement is the best approach.*

9. Those who are due for the Booster dose, should not hesitate. Precautionary dose, Booster dose, third dose, whatever, just take it when it is due. Don't rush to be the first in the line. **Don't hesitate, vaccinate! When due, get booster too!**

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