

# A Covid Care Guide for Seniors

Stay Safe Stay Healthy



## A message from the Founder's desk



When times get tough, we must fight to emerge healthy and strong.

We can do this by being cautious and treating our seniors with utmost care.

We're all in this together. Let's strive to keep our seniors & ourselves safe.



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# How can elders check their oxygen levels at home during the pandemic?

Steps to check your oxygen level using pulse oximeter:

- Make sure batteries are inserted in the device.
- Make sure your finger is dry and clean.
- Position your finger so that it faces the LED light inside.
- The probe should not be too tight or too loose.
- Wait for half a minute and observe the readings.
- There are 2 different readings shown
  - a) Oxygen saturation % of blood
  - b) Pulse rate
- If the SpO2 is above 94%, then the oxygen level is considered to be normal.

\*Ideal pulse oximeter readings:

An **oxygen saturation** level of **94% to 100%** is considered **normal**.



What causes inaccurate readings?



- Nail polish and tattoos
- Movement of the body
- Poor perfusion
- Carbon monoxide poisoning

## How frequently should your oxygen level be monitored?

Your **oxygen levels** should be **monitored** once in **4-6 hours**.



### Be cautious and don't panic!

Oxygen level below 94 is an alarming sign. In that case, primarily you have to get down in a prone position and check your oxygen level after some time. This might help to increase the oxygen level. If SpO2 is decreasing to less than 94, then report to your doctor immediately. Low oxygen level could also be a symptom of pneumonia.

### Don't rely solely on your device.

Keep a track of other signs that your blood oxygen levels could be low, such as:

Shortness of breath or trouble in breathing | Tightness in the chest | Worsening cough  
Restlessness or discomfort | Fast pulse

### Check for existing health issues.

Normal oxygen level readings will not apply to people with other medical conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma and cardiovascular diseases, sleep apnea.

# Importance of six-minute walk test for Covid infected elders

The entire country is battling the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Lakhs of cases are being reported everyday. The shortage of beds and oxygen has worsened the situation in the whole country. Therefore mild and asymptomatic elders are advised to be in home isolation. Elders are advised to perform a six-minute walk test to monitor their oxygen levels regularly.



## What is a six-minute walk test?

A six-minute walk test is recommended to check the oxygen level of patients who are isolating at home. It helps those who are mild and asymptomatic Covid-19 patients.

## Why is a six-minute walk test needed?

Sometimes infected elders have low oxygen levels, they don't experience any discomfort.

Such a condition is called 'happy hypoxia'.

Hence a six-minute walk test helps us understand the working capacity of the lungs and the extent of damage and hypoxia.

## How can you perform a six-minute walk test?

- Firstly, monitor your oxygen level before you start walking.
- Then take a walk inside the room for six minutes and again check your oxygen level.
- After six minutes of walk, if the oxygen level does not go down & the reading is above 94% the patient's health will be considered normal.
- This can be done 2-3 times a day to monitor the oxygen level.
- Seniors above 60 years of age can run this test by walking for three minutes instead of six.



**Note:** This test is not advisable for asthma patients.

# Home isolation tips for mild and asymptomatic elders

## 1 Isolate yourself in a separate room with an attached bathroom



- Take enough rest and stay calm.
- Connect with your doctor and update your health status on a regular basis.
- Keep yourself busy reading books, watching your favourite TV shows.
- Avoid watching the news or any shows which lead to stress.
- Talk to your friends and relatives through video calls to avoid loneliness.

## 2 Keep your room windows open



- Open windows to keep the air circulating.
- Ventilation is a must and it helps prevent suffocation.



## 3 Wear a double or triple layered mask



- Whenever you open the room door, ensure both you, the patient, and family members are wearing a mask covering the nose and mouth during conversations.
- Always remember to maintain physical distancing between family members.
- Dispose of your mask after 8 hours of using it or if it is wet or visibly soiled.

## 4 Sanitize your hands and surfaces



- Wash/sanitize your hands frequently.
- Sanitize frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, tables etc.
- Clean your room with 1% hypochlorite solution on a daily basis.

# How to manage infected elders with mild symptoms at home

Infected elders above 60 years old and with co-morbid conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, chronic lung disease, liver or kidney disease, cerebrovascular disease etc. shall only be allowed home isolation after a proper evaluation by the treating doctor.

## 1 Only have medicines prescribed by the doctor



- Avoid self-medication. Only have medicines prescribed by the doctor.
- Don't forget to have Vitamin C and Zinc tablets that boost your immunity.

## 2 Do steam inhalation and warm water gargles

- Take steam inhalation 2-3 times daily for 5 minutes.
- Perform warm water gargles twice a day.
- They help prevent the load of viruses and infection.



## 3 Stay hydrated and eat nutritious food



- Drink 3-4 litres of water daily (use boiled and cooled water).
- Have a lot of fluids to maintain adequate hydration.
- Eat healthy food even if you are unable to taste it. Eating healthy food helps speedy recovery and boosts immunity.

## 4 Monitor oxygen level



- It is important to have a pulse oximeter at home to keep track of your oxygen level.
- Monitor your oxygen level every 4-6 hours.
- If your oxygen level is less than 94%, report to your doctor immediately.

## Do breathing and yoga exercises (Follow your doctor's advice)

- Breathing exercise helps to get air deep into your lungs and clear secretions.
- Simple and basic yoga asanas help you to feel energised and keep your mind calm.



## 6 Reach out to your doctor or healthcare helpline



- Contact your doctor or healthcare helpline immediately in case of high fever, breathlessness, severe cough or any new symptoms.

## Caregivers should be available 24/7

- Caregivers should be available 24/7 to take care of the patient.
- Communication between caregiver and hospital must be maintained throughout the duration of home isolation.



# How to take care of elderly during home isolation: Advisory for caregivers

Caregivers should be healthy without any medical conditions such as BP, diabetes and respiratory issues. They should always be in touch with a medical helpline or health workers.

- Wash your hands for 40 seconds with soap and water before and after helping the older individual.
- Always wear a triple-layered mask, gloves and a plastic apron. The apron should be always disinfected with sodium hypochlorite solution.
- If the mask gets wet or dirty, dispose of it immediately.
- Avoid coming in direct contact with the patient's cough, sneeze and items used by the patient like bed sheets, utensils, towels, etc.
- Patient's bed sheets and clothes should be washed at 60-90 degree temperature with detergents and disinfectants like Dettol.
- Dry the clothes in the sun.
- Use 1% sodium hypochlorite solution while cleaning the floor to disinfect it.
- Always use gloves while serving food and giving medicines to the patient.

Wear disposable gloves while washing the utensils used by the patient. Wash the utensils properly.

- The caregiver should also monitor their health. Keep monitoring your temperature and other symptoms on a daily basis. If any variations in health are seen, report to the health care team immediately.
- Take medicines regularly as advised by the doctor.



# Post Covid-19 care for seniors



## 1 Take enough rest

- Stay isolated for another week. Viruses will be present in your body even after symptoms disappear.
- Try to have complete rest and enough sleep which help you with a speedy recovery.
- Don't rush to a regular lifestyle.

## Start exercising daily

- Start with simple exercises daily. These might help to strengthen your weak body and keep you physically and mentally healthy.
- It helps to improve the circulation of blood and oxygen.
- Don't do hard exercises or too much workout. 10-15 minutes exercise per day is sufficient.



## 3 Have a nutritious diet and stay hydrated



- Eating healthy and home cooked food speeds up the recovery.
- Eat supplement-rich food and also include plenty of proteins in your diet like boiled egg, grains, fresh vegetable soup, nuts etc.
- Eating citrus fruits like orange, fresh lime which are rich in Vitamin C will help build your immunity and decrease the risk of spreading infection.
- Don't start with heavy & spicy meals immediately. Eat soft & healthy food which eases digestion.
- Continue to drink plenty of water and maintain fluid intakes. Eat less salt and sugar.

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## Continue having multi-vitamin tablets



- Don't stop multivitamin tablets like vitamin C, zinc and vitamin D3 tablets unless your doctor suggests otherwise.
- Multi-vitamin tablets help in removing body weakness.

## Give exercise to your brain

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- Play some memory games, crosswords, puzzles etc., to regain your lost attention, memory and cognitive thinking abilities.

## Monitor your oxygen saturation level

- Continue to monitor your blood oxygen level for some more days. Even after recovering from the Covid-19 infection, sometimes there could be lung damage.



- Contact your doctor immediately in case of any fluctuations in the blood oxygen level.

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## Watch out for other symptoms

- Even after getting covid report negative, other problems may persist like difficulty in breathing, tightness in the chest. In that case, consult your doctor immediately.



## Talk to a counsellor or loved one

- Take the help of counsellor to come out of the sad feelings.
- Talk to your loved one to reduce the feeling of loneliness.



**Disclaimer:** Take the advice and instructions from your doctor before taking any medicines, having particular food and performing any exercises.

**Source:** <https://pharomeasy.in/blog/6-must-dos-post-covid-19-recovery/>  
<https://www.dnaindia.com/health/report-feeling-weak-after-recovering-from-covid-19-this-is-what-you-should-do-2888072>  
<https://www.ndtv.com/health/post-covid-19-care-6-things-you-need-to-do-after-recovering-from-coronavirus-2302135>

# Covid-19 vaccine: Benefits and side effects

It is very common for elders to feel anxious about getting a new vaccine. However, the safety and effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccines have been ensured through several trials.

## Benefits of getting Covid-19 vaccine

### Protection against Covid-19 infection:

Covid-19 vaccines produce protection against the disease by developing an immune response to the coronavirus. Developing immunity through vaccination means there will be a reduced risk of developing severe illness and its consequences. Vaccination results in milder symptoms if you get infected.

### Protection of family and people around you:

By getting the Covid-19 vaccine you lessen the chance of spreading the infection to family members and people around you.

### High rate of effectiveness:

The vaccines will safeguard 19 out of every 20 persons from becoming seriously ill with Covid-19.



## Common Side effects of Covid-19 vaccine

Covid-19 vaccines can cause side effects like other vaccines, most of which are mild or moderate and go away within a few days on their own.

- Pain at the injection site
- Fever and headache
- Fatigue and muscle pain
- Chills and diarrhoea

## Safety precautions even after getting a vaccine

- Continue to wear a mask in public places.
- Maintain social distancing when you are in a crowd.
- Wash/sanitize your hands frequently.





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