



# **DAILY NEWS BULLETIN**

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY  
Monday 20220420

## **Traditional medicine**

**WHO centre in Gujarat to usher in new era of traditional medicine: PM  
Inaugurates slew of projects in poll-bound state (The Tribune:20220420)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/who-centre-in-gujarat-to-usher-in-new-era-of-traditional-medicine-pm-387737>



WHO centre in Gujarat to usher in new era of traditional medicine: PM  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Mauritius PM Pravind Kumar Jugnauth (L) and WHO DG Tedros Ghebreyesus in Jamnagar. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a roadshow in Ahmedabad with his Mauritian counterpart Pravind Jugnauth on Tuesday evening, culminating a series of events, including the laying of foundation stone of WHO Traditional Medicine Centre in Jamnagar district and inaugurating a slew of projects in his home state which goes to the polls towards the year-end.

“The establishment of the WHO centre will usher in a new era of traditional medicine globally,” said the PM on the occasion.

The Prime Minister began the day’s engagements with the inauguration of the Banas dairy complex at Deodar, where he also addressed a rally of about one lakh people, largely women dairy farmers, and recalled that India was world’s largest milk producer.

The PM also virtually opened a project for expansion of cheese and whey production at Palanpur, an organic fertiliser and bio-CNG plant at Dama, and virtually laid the foundation stones for four new biogas plants.

The Prime Minister said the establishment of the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) here would usher in an age of traditional medicine globally. “The centre will start the age of traditional medicine in the world in the next 25 years,” he said while listing the benefits of traditional medicine. One condition for setting up the centre is that India would bear the operating costs for the next 10 years. India will also invest about Rs 2,000 crore to set it up.

PM Modi along with the Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth laid the foundation stone for the centre in the presence of WHO DG Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. The PM also thanked the UN for accepting India's proposal and declaring 2023 as International Millet Year.

The PM had started his three-day Gujarat visit on Monday by visiting the Command and Control Centre for Schools in Gandhinagar.

On the concluding day of his visit on Wednesday, he will inaugurate the Global AYUSH Investment and Innovation Summit at Gandhinagar and later attend the Adijati Maha Sammelan in Dahod as well as lay the foundation stone of various development projects. Gujarat will go to the polls in December this year.

At Banas dairy, the PM said India was the world's largest producer of milk. "When the livelihood of crores of farmers depends on milk, India produces milk worth Rs 8.5 lakh crore annually. This is something that many, including renowned economists, fail to pay attention to. As against this, even the turnover of wheat and rice is not Rs 8.5 lakh crore. And small farmers are the biggest beneficiaries of the dairy sector," he said.

"Many goals are being achieved simultaneously through Gobardhan (to manage cattle waste). Firstly, it is keeping the villages clean and, secondly, cattle farmers are also getting money for cow dung," he said.

Rs. 8.5L cr yield, India top milk producer

PM said India was the world's largest producer of milk. "India produces milk worth Rs. 8.5 lakh crore annually. Even the turnover of wheat and rice is not Rs. 8.5 lakh crore. Small farmers are the biggest beneficiaries of the dairy sector," he said.

## **Healthy liver**

### **How to maintain a healthy liver (The Tribune:20220420)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/how-to-maintain-a-healthy-liver-387702>

'Avoid fatty foods, exercise regularly, consume alcohol responsibly and in moderation, cut down or stop smoking, avoid use of illicit drugs'

Liver, which is the second largest and the most complex organ in the body, after the brain, can be easily damaged if not taken good care of, said experts on the occasion of World Liver Day.

World liver day is observed every April 19 to spread awareness about liver related disease.

The liver is a key player in our body's digestive system, and helps in proper digestion, metabolism, removal of toxins, and nutrient storage. The organ plays a vital role in affecting our overall health and wellness, thus to improve its functioning to prevent damage, a healthy lifestyle is important, the health experts said.

"A healthy liver is the key to a long life term. With slight changes in lifestyle you can maintain good liver health," said Dr Ameet Mandot, Senior consultant and Clinical lead - Adult Hepatology and Liver Transplant unit - Global Hospital, Parel, Mumbai.

"Maintaining the health of the liver is quite necessary as it performs many functions and plays a vital role in the human digestive system. Everything you eat or drink passes through the liver. You cannot survive without a liver. It is an organ that can be easily damaged if you don't take good care of it," added Dr Abhishek Deepak, Senior Consultant - Gastroenterologist at Sharda Hospital, Greater Noida.

The health experts explained that leading an unhealthy lifestyle - with improper diet, lack of physical activity, being overweight, can all lead to conditions like diabetes, hypertension, thyroid disorders, and abnormal cholesterol levels.

All these are major risk factors for developing non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), which then progresses to liver cirrhosis -- late-stage liver disease in which healthy liver tissue is replaced with scar tissue and the liver is permanently damaged.

Mandot suggested maintaining a healthy diet along with weight management.

"Avoid fatty foods, exercise regularly, consume alcohol responsibly and in moderation, cut down or stop smoking, avoid use of illicit drugs," Mandot noted.

According to Dr Gaurav Gupta, Consultant & Chief Surgeon, Department of Liver Transplant & HPB Surgery, Fortis Hospital Mulund, not drinking enough water, taking stress as well as taking some painkillers and other drugs may also contribute to liver disease.

Gupta said that "painkillers containing acetaminophen, paracetamol, and narcotics; sleeping pills; stimulants/ADHD drugs like ritalin, amphetamine; and cocaine, marijuana, and ecstasy," can easily surpass a safe threshold of liver tolerance and can cause significant damage to the organ.

"Intravenous drugs can transmit infections like hepatitis B and C, which can also lead to chronic liver disease and even liver cancer," he added.

The experts also suggested to avoid use of contaminated needles, getting proper medical care if exposed to blood, do not share personal hygiene items, practice safe sex, wash hands, follow directions on all medications and importantly get vaccinated. IANS

## **Microplastics**

### **Microplastics in blue mussels signal plastics in human food supplies (The Tribune:20220420)**

#### **Microplastics are any type of plastic that is less than 5 mm long**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/science-technology/microplastics-in-blue-mussels-signal-plastics-in-human-food-supplies-387701>

Microplastics in blue mussels signal plastics in human food supplies  
Photo for representational purpose only. iStock

Australian researchers have found microplastics in variable concentrations in blue mussels and water within the intertidal zone at some of the country's most popular and more remote beaches.

This means microplastics are now finding their way into human food supplies - including wild-caught and ocean-farmed fish and seafood sourced from the once pristine Southern Ocean and gulf waters of South Australia, warned researchers at Flinders University in Australia.

Microplastics are any type of plastic that is less than 5 mm long. It has become the most crucial environmental and health issue, seen from the top of Mount Everest to the deepest oceans.

"Our findings shed light on the urgent need to prevent microplastic pollution by working with the communities, industries and government to protect these fragile marine systems," said Professor Karen Burke da Silva, from the varsity.

In the paper, published in Science of the Total Environment, the team sampled varying levels of microplastics on 10 popular beaches across South Australia, from Coffin Bay and Port Lincoln on the West Coast to Point Lowly and Whyalla on the Spencer Gulf, to popular Adelaide metropolitan beaches along with Victor Harbor, Robe and Kangaroo Island.

Low to medium levels of microplastics measured in the common blue mussel (*Mytilus* spp.) - a filter feeder affected by ecosystem conditions - were measured to analyse the main kinds of pollution affecting the environment, and single-use plastic was the main offender.

Microplastics are ubiquitous in the marine environment and tend to be more abundant in mussel samples near large towns and cities, the team found.

"By investigating microplastic load in the mussel, we call attention to the implications of microplastic pollution on South Australia's unique marine ecosystems and on the local human food chain," said Janet Klein, the first author of the article.

Trillions of microplastic particles exist in the world's oceans, with the highest concentrations recently found in the shallow sea floor sediment off Naifaru in the Maldives (at 278 particles kg) and lowest reported in the surface waters of the Antarctic Southern Ocean.

Microplastic concentration in the South Australian intertidal water was found to be low to moderate relative to global levels and microplastic abundance in mussels - within the range also reported globally, the team noted.

Recently, scientists at the University of Hull and Hull York Medical School in the UK for the first time discovered microplastics in live human lungs, a finding that indicates we are inhaling the dangerous substances without knowledge that can have a major impact on our respiratory health.

Microplastics have also been detected in cosmetic products and in human bloodstream in detectable levels.

## **Fatty liver**

**Sedentary lifestyle leading to rise in cases of fatty liver  
Healthy diet, exercise and keeping weight under control can improve liver health and reduce the scarring (The Tribune:20220420)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/amritsar/sedentary-lifestyle-leading-to-rise-in-cases-of-fatty-liver-387578>

Sedentary lifestyle leading to rise in cases of fatty liver

Liver disease seems to have become a lifestyle disease in India with more cases of liver disorder being reported on a daily basis. While India is already one of worst affected developing countries infected by the hepatitis virus of all five kinds (hepatitis A, B, C, D and E), the increasing cases of both non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) and alcoholic fatty liver disease (AFLD), have further worsened the situation.

Liver specialists say over 10 lakh new patients are diagnosed every year in India with chronic liver disease and still people are not sensitised about liver diseases and ways to prevent them. They said hepatitis C is the worst type of virus, which if detected on time, can be completely curable. However, if ignored, it can lead to cancer. "One third of liver cancers in India are caused by hepatitis C. There are about 300 million hepatitis cases world over," they added.

Experts further said as many as two lakh people have been screened in Punjab in the last five years for hepatitis C, of which 93 per cent have recovered. Besides, dedicated efforts are being taken to eliminate the disease by 2030.

Comparing the cases of hepatitis B with NAFLD and AFLD, the doctors said while cases of hepatitis B are declining in the state, the cases of fatty liver are on the rise. Though no definite

statistics are available, the doctors say they have been observing at least 100 -150 new patients with NAFLD every month and nearly 100-120 cases of AFLD, with patients being across age groups.

They said while a few people have fatty liver due to other diseases such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), chronic hepatitis B, chronic hepatitis C or haemochromatosis (a genetic abnormality of iron storage), or reactions to drugs, however, NAFLD has become common and is seen in every third person in India.

Experts said NAFLD and its more severe form, non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), are due to accumulation of excess fat in the liver. But if not treated on time, it triggers inflammation, which can lead to the development of fibrosis, cirrhosis and liver cancer. Besides, there are currently no effective treatments for NAFLD and NASH, and management relies on lifestyle changes such as weight loss and exercise.

Throwing light on NAFLD and AFLD, Nawanshahr-based Dr Dinesh Verma, surgical specialist, said fatty liver condition occurs due to excessive build-up of fat which leads to scarring of liver.

“In severe cases, the scarring can lead to liver failure. Among people who drink a lot of alcohol, the condition is known as alcoholic fatty liver disease, while among those who don’t drink or take it in insignificant amounts, its metabolic dysfunction-associated fatty liver disease (MAFLD), also known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease,” he said.

He further said prevalence of non-alcoholic fatty liver in obese children aged 5–18 years is also rising. “People sometimes think it is hereditary, but it is genetic disease. It comes quicker to those with metabolic syndrome, like patients who are overweight, diabetic, and have hypertension, heart disease, cholesterol problems, thyroid and PCOD,” he added.

Dr Verma said the only thing which would help patients with NAFLD is change in lifestyle. “If they improve their lifestyle with exercise and diet, that itself is more than enough,” he said.

Dr Amardeep Singh of Jalandhar said every third person in the district has a fatty liver. “In majority of the ultrasounds we do, even to diagnose other diseases, fatty liver is commonly found. But those having AFLD, they must understand that continued alcohol consumption can ruin their liver in more ways than one can imagine. It can damage the liver cell and leads to swelling and scarring,” he said.

“On the other side, NAFLD is more of a lifestyle disease which is taking the shape of an epidemic, affecting approximately 25 to 30 per cent of the general population. The most serious concern of this disease is that it’s a silent disease as a person might not experience any symptoms, even as the disease progresses, therefore, regular check-ups are suggested” he said.

He said by maintaining a healthy lifestyle and adding foods like garlic, coffee, leeks, asparagus, and probiotics, one can easily prevent this disease from progressing. — TNS

World Liver Day today

Every year on April 19, World Liver Day is observed to raise awareness of liver-related disorders and diseases. The liver is the second largest and the most complex organ in the body,

with the exception to the brain. It is a key player in our body's digestive system. Everything one eats or drinks, including medicine, passes through the liver. One cannot survive without liver. It is an organ which can be easily damaged if one doesn't take care of it.

What is fatty liver?

Fatty liver is a common condition caused by the storage of extra fat in the liver. Most people have no symptoms, and it doesn't cause serious problems for them. In some cases, though, it can lead to liver damage. The good news is you can often prevent or even reverse fatty liver disease with lifestyle changes. As no obvious signs or symptoms of liver disease are felt until it is fairly advanced or the liver is damaged, doctors suggest regular check-ups and maintaining a good lifestyle to keep your liver healthy.

**Covid Positivity Rate (The Asian Age :20220420)**

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=16310150>

# Covid positivity rises 3-fold in a week in city

Positivity on Apr. 11 was 2.70%, jumped to 7.72% on Apr. 18

**New Delhi, April 19:** After a steady decline in Covid cases, Delhi has been witnessing a spurt in new infections with the positivity rate registering a nearly three-fold rise between April 11 and 18, according to city health department data.

On April 11, the positivity rate stood at 2.70 per cent, which jumped to 3.95 per cent on April 15 followed by 5.33 per cent on April 16 and 7.72 per cent on April 18, according to the data.

Last week, Delhi recorded a total of 2,606 positive Covid cases against 67,360 tests conducted during the period while the average positivity rate was 4.79 per cent, it showed.

On April 11, 5,079 Covid tests were conducted, of which 137 came out positive while on April 18, 6,492 tests were conducted and over 501 people tested positive, according to the data provided by the Delhi government. The national capital registered two deaths due to Covid during this period. The positivity rate

## Delhi logs 632 Covid cases, no fatality in past 24 hours

**New Delhi, April 19:** Delhi has recorded a nearly 26 per cent jump in fresh Covid cases in the last 24 hours, but the positivity rate has dropped to 4.42 per cent, according to data shared by the city health department on Tuesday.

No death has been reported in the city due to the coronavirus in this time period, it said. The department said

surged during the April 11-18 week, barring on April 17 when it dropped to 4.21 per cent from 5.33 per cent the previous day.

Doctors said the cases are expected to surge in the coming days. However, they said the current trends are not concerning as most of the cases are mild and due to the Omicron XE variant.

"The variant has more

that 632 fresh Covid cases have been reported and the positivity rate is 4.42 per cent. The city had on Monday recorded 501 cases and zero death while the positivity rate stood at 7.72 per cent.

There are 9,735 beds for Covid patients in Delhi hospitals and 80 (0.82 per cent) of them are occupied, the department said in bulletin.

— PTI

transmissibility but is causing mild infection. It is causing upper respiratory infection and not lower respiratory infection," said Dr Jugal Kishore, the head of community medicine at Safdarjung hospital.

The doctors said as the cases rise, there will be some increase in the mortality and hospitalisation rate, but it will not go beyond control. — PTI

WHO (The Asian Age :20220420)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=16308861>

# WHO unit will give big boost to traditional medicine: PM

■ Continued from Page 1 when India will be celebrating 100 years of independence," he added. He emphasised that though it is important to be "disease-free", the ultimate goal should be "wellness". "During the Covid-19 pandemic, we realised the importance of wellness. That is the reason why the world is searching for new avenues of healthcare delivery," said Mr Modi. Referring to ancient scriptures, he said Ayurveda and other Indian traditional medicine systems were not limited to only treatment, as

they are considered as holistic sciences. Indian traditional knowledge can play a crucial role in dealing with new diseases and ailments related to modern lifestyles, the PM said. "In India, there was a time when our elders used to stress the consumption of millet. But we saw a decline in its consumption over the years. But people are once again talking about it. I am happy that the UN has also accepted India's proposal to popularise the use of millet in our diet," Mr Modi said. Year 2023 has been declared as the

International Millet Year by the United Nations, he informed the audience. Formulations based on traditional medical systems like Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha are in huge demand worldwide today, Mr Modi noted. Yoga is helping people across the globe in fighting diabetes, obesity, depression and several such ailments, he said, expressing hope that the centre will play an important role in popularising Yoga globally. The Prime Minister also set five goals for the WHO-GCTM.

"Your first goal should be to make use of technology to prepare a comprehensive database of all the traditional medicines available in the world. This centre should have a global repository of all such traditional knowledge. This will help us in passing on this knowledge about traditional medicine of different countries to the next generations," said the PM. The GCTM should also work towards setting international standards for testing and certification of traditional medicine, he said. "This will help in creat-

ing trust about traditional medicines. Though many of India's traditional medicines are popular abroad, the supply remains limited because of the lack of any international standards," he said. As a third goal, the PM suggested the centre organise annual events such as Traditional Medicine Festival so that experts from across the globe come together. "Your fourth aim should be to mobilise funds for research in traditional medicine. Just like the pharma sector gets funds worth billions for

research, we need to develop similar resources for this sector," he said. In the end, Mr Modi also urged the centre to develop "holistic treatment protocols" for some specific diseases. Mr Modi and Dr Ghebreyesus came together in Jamnagar after India had on Saturday questioned the WHO's methodology to estimate Covid-19 mortalities in the country, saying that such a mathematical modelling cannot be applied to estimate the death figures in a country of vast geographical size and population. — PTI

## Covid Cases (The Asian Age :20220420)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=16308874>

# Keep a close watch as Covid cases rise, act with caution

**T**he Union health ministry, in its direction to the Kerala government to update data on the Covid-19 pandemic on a daily basis, has pointed out that “daily and diligent reporting of data is critical to arrive at a meaningful understanding of pandemic in the districts, state and national level and ensure that any anomalies, surge or emerging trends can be captured in a timely manner”. The Union ministry, while pointing out that the delayed reporting by the state “has impacted and skewed the status of India’s key monitoring indicators like cases, deaths and positivity”, was rightfully concerned more with the relevance of the data on Covid-19 “as it is a highly infectious disease and also has an associated risk of emergence of new variants”.

There is enough reason for India to take the daily data on the pandemic seriously, even though it has negotiated three waves of the pandemic. The number of total new infections crossed 1,000 on Tuesday and several states, including national capital Delhi, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh have shown signs of an uptick in the numbers and test positivity rates. Delhi has reported more than 500 new cases for the second consecutive day on Tuesday against the daily average for seven days of around 300, and has tightened Covid precautions for schools. Uttar Pradesh, after seeing the numbers going up, has made masks

**India escaped the third wave of the pandemic basically on the strength of the lessons it has learnt in the first two and the alacrity with which it responded to the new one. Vaccines also helped us along the way.**

compulsory in public places in five districts; Haryana and the Union Territory of Chandigarh have followed suit. An unmistakable point of relief is that there is no significant rise in the number of hospitalisations.

These trends emerge amid a series of reassuring developments that suggested an end to the vice grip of the pandemic on human lives. It was only the other day that the number of daily air passengers crossed four lakhs in India; a US court ordered that masks are no longer mandatory on flights and the Joe Biden administration said it will no longer enforce mask mandate on public transport.

All these developments go on to prove that despite the remarkable achievements humanity has made against the fight against the SARS-CoV-2 virus, there still are weak points and, as the Union health ministry pointed out, need to constantly update and analyse the data to arrive at correct conclusions every day. Every single point on which we have an upper hand against the pandemic has come the hard way, be it vaccines, medicines or the evolution of the treatment protocol. They must be put to use as and when required based on current data, and hence the import of the health ministry missive.

India escaped the third wave of the pandemic basically on the strength of the lessons it has learnt in the first two and the alacrity with which it responded to the new one. The universal vaccination programme which covered a lot of ground also helped us. The governments at the Centre and in the states are required to show the same kind of alertness should we aim to avoid a repeat of the first two waves. Any decision on further relaxing the Covid-19 protocol must be made taking the latest trends in account.

**Covid Cases Surge (The Asian Age :20220420)**

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=16308870>

# Don't worry too much as Covid cases surge again



Chandrakant  
Lahariya

**T**he daily new Covid-19 cases in India are showing an upward trend, driven by a rise in select areas like the Delhi-NCR region and Haryana. For a day, the trend became very steep because of the backlog of cases reported by Kerala. Alongside, there have been a few reports of Covid-19 cases in school children. These developments have raised some concerns and face masks have once again been made mandatory in some districts of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, as well as Chandigarh. Is this increase in cases a reason for worry and the start of the fourth wave of the pandemic in India? Are children at risk of Covid-19 and should the schools again be moved back to a hybrid mode? Should masks be made mandatory again? Let's discuss what is at stake here.

The current rise in Covid-19 cases is largely localised to New Delhi, the NCR region and Haryana. This can largely be attributed to the removal of Covid-related restrictions, resulting in an increased social mobility and travel. Most of those being tested positive are asymptomatic or mild symptomatic and had got themselves tested voluntarily, for travel or other reasons. There is very marginal or no increase in hospitalisation or the need for ICU beds. The remaining Indian states continue to report single- or double-digit cases and there is no upward trend.

At present, the Omicron and its sub-lineage BA.1, BA.2 and recombinant XE (mix of BA.1 and BA.2) are the circulating SARS-CoV-2 variants in India. A few confirmed cases due to XE are not a cause of worry as it is not a new variant, and

February that was caused by Omicron, there is no scientific reason to believe that XE, BA.2 or another Omicron sub-lineage will cause fresh waves in the country. In short, there is no reason to worry about the increase in Covid-19 cases. This state-specific rise is not the start of the fourth wave in India.

The current Omicron wave in China and the stringent restrictions there are also being interpreted with fear and apprehension. However, the situation in China is different from India. China had not faced a second wave for the past two years and the population with natural immunity is low. The vaccines used in China also had the lowest efficacy amongst all the Covid-19 vaccines. India has already faced three Covid-19 waves (and thus has high natural infection) and high adult immunisation coverage with better efficacy vaccines. This puts India in a situation of hybrid immunity and thus better protected from Covid-19 risks.

It is widely accepted now that SARS-CoV-2 will stay with humanity for long, possibly forever. In the months ahead, the rise and fall in Covid-19 cases at regular intervals is going to be a normal phenomenon. However, scientific and epidemiological evidence points that in any future rise, because of hybrid population immunity, the severity of infection would remain low.

It is time to review the response strategies as well. The masks are proven tools in reducing Covid-19 transmission. However, in the early part of the pandemic, when the entire population was susceptible and vaccinations had not started, the universal masking had clear-cut benefits. The Omicron

**The Omicron and its sub-lineage BA.1, BA.2 and recombinant XE (mix of BA.1 and BA.2) are the circulating SARS-CoV-2 variants in India. A few confirmed cases due to XE are not a cause of worry as it is not a new variant...**

vention of SARS-CoV-2 transmission. The population risk has also come down. Therefore, the way we do not boil the entire overhead water tank in our house to prepare two cups of tea, making face masks mandatory for everyone when the risk is differential is not the right approach any longer. The approach for the time ahead has to be "protect the vulnerable" and the face masks and other Covid appropriate behaviour (CAB) should only be voluntary.

Then, the government policy decisions should not be "knee jerk" and rather be determined by a calm assessment of the situation and informed by emerging evidence. The current localised upward trend in Covid-19 cases is not a justification to rush to make face masks mandatory again. The epidemiological evidence points that a differential and voluntary approach for all CAB, including face masks, should be followed. The fully vaccinated adults and all healthy children can live a normal life with minimal restrictions. Elderly and other high-risk adults need to follow face mask wearing a little more diligently, especially in indoor and crowded spaces and when meeting non-family members. This behaviour needs to be suitably adjusted for local transmission dynamics but still remain voluntary.

More specifically, the children reported to have tested positive are all asymptomatic or mild symptomatic. There is no evidence that these children had got infection at the schools. Rather, more likely from other family members. Then, the suc-

of all children in India have got the infection (thus protected), when the schools were closed. Studies have noted children do get the infection at the same rate as adults; but the probability of adverse outcomes of moderate to severe Covid-19 disease in children is very low. In this backdrop, children being tested positive is not a reason to worry too much or to close the schools. This risk has not altered with the emergence of the new variants. In Indian states, including in Delhi and Haryana, the schools should be open at full capacity for offline classes — the only exception being that parents should be informed if a child has tested positive in their child's class/section. The other measure should be that children who are not feeling well or have fever, cough or cold should not attend school.

At this stage of the pandemic, daily new Covid-19 cases are not the right way to track it. Therefore, policy decisions should be made based upon trends in clinically confirmed cases, hospitalisations and ICU admission. There is an urgent need to increase public communications for voluntary adherence to mask wearing, specially by vulnerable populations. At an individual level, people need to do a self-assessment of risk and follow Covid appropriate behaviour accordingly. All those eligible should also get a Covid-19 booster shot.

There is no reason to worry unduly and get concerned about the rise in Covid-19 cases in some parts of India. The trend is not nationwide. This is not the start of the fourth wave. All pandemic-related measures should be voluntary and all economic, social and educational activities should continue without any restrictions, but with individual precautions. Most important, the schools should continue to open with full capacity for offline classes.

**Dr Chandrakant Lahariya** is a physician-epidemiologist

## **Health care delivery**

### **Health care delivery in focus after Covid: Modi (Hindustan Times:20220420)**

<https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=204eb10e6&imageview=0>

Health care delivery in focus after Covid: Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and Mauritius PM Pravind Kumar Jugnauth in Jamnagar on Tuesday. ANI

The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for a new dimension in health care delivery, a challenge that India can meet, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday during the groundbreaking function for the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in Jamnagar.

The centre will become the first global outpost for traditional medicine across the world, and aims to leverage new technologies and evidence-based research in an effort to mainstream such methods.

The function was attended by World Health Organization (WHO) director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.

“India considers it her duty to share experiences in Ayurveda and integrative medicine with world... India’s yoga tradition is already helping the world fight diseases like diabetes, obesity and depression,” Modi said.

“The WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) is a recognition of India’s contribution and potential in this field...India takes this partnership as a huge responsibility for serving the entire humanity,” he added in his address.

“The importance of wellness in our lives became evident during the pandemic. This is why the world today needs a new dimension for health care delivery. I am glad to note that this year, WHO’s theme of “our planet, our health” takes forward India’s own “one Earth, one health” approach,” he said. “This is a truly global project...the world will come to Jamnagar and India, and Jamnagar and India will go to the world through traditional medicine. I hope this will be an important thing that will bring the world together,” Ghebreyesus said in his address. This was the 57-year-old Ghebreyesus’s first visit to India since the start of Covid-19 outbreak — an event that put him on the global centre stage.

He said traditional medicines products are abound globally, and the Jamnagar centre will go a long way in bringing the promise of the traditional medicine to fruition. For many regions of

the world, traditional medicine is the first line of treatment. GCTM will focus on data, innovation and sustainability and will optimise the use of traditional medicine, he added. The centre's five areas will be research and leadership, evidence and learning, data and analytics, sustainability and equity, and innovation and technology, said Ghebreyesus.

“Examples of traditional medicines being turned into modern medicines abound around the world...But when it comes to how these products are identified, developed, and tested, and how the benefits are shared...on that, there is still much work to be done,” he said. “Today marks a critical step in helping to bring the promise of traditional medicine to fruition”, he added.

Modi's positioning of India and its traditional medicines as a global health asset comes on the heels of India's role in Covid-19 vaccine supplies. Indian vaccine-makers such as Serum Institute of India (SII) and Biological E are among the world's largest manufacturers by volume, with SII among the biggest suppliers to the WHO-led Covax Facility for vaccine distribution to low and middle-income countries.

Video messages from the Prime Ministers of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and the President of Maldives were played on the occasion. Union ministers Dr Mansukh Mandavia, Sarbananda Sonowal, Munjapara Mahendrabhai, and chief minister of Gujarat, Bhupendrabhai Patel, were among those present.

Modi also stressed on attaining wellness as the ultimate goal. “India's traditional medicine system is not limited to treatment. It is a holistic science of life. Ayurveda goes beyond just healing and treatment,” said Modi. He also highlighted the three-decade long association with Mauritian PM Jugnauth and his family.

Later, on Tuesday evening, Modi and Jugnauth landed from Jamnagar to Ahmedabad, where they participated in a roadshow. About 30 platforms have been erected at regular intervals on the two and half-kilometre-long route from the airport circle to the Indira Bridge where troupes performed.

Modi is on a three-day visit to his home state of Gujarat from April 18-20 where he will inaugurate development projects worth over ₹20,000 crore.

On April 20, he will inaugurate the Global AYUSH Investment & Innovation Summit at Gandhinagar.

## **Infection**

### **DDMA meet today amid uptick in Covid cases; 632 fresh infections (Hindustan Times:20220420)**

<https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=2042f8ebc1f&imageview=0>

, the state's health bulletin showed a day before the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) was scheduled to meet and review the city's pandemic situation.

Tuesday's fresh infections came on the back of 14,299 tests, of which 4.42% samples turned positive. This number, known as the test positivity rate, was 7.72% on Monday.

Senior officials of the Delhi government's health department said authorities are keeping a close watch on the case trajectory and are well prepared to handle a surge — at present, they added, the situation is well under control since less than 1% of the city's Covid-19 beds are occupied.

Senior officials said DDMA is, in its Wednesday meeting, likely to take a decision on reintroducing the city's mask mandate, after Haryana and Uttar Pradesh issued orders asking NCR districts to make masking mandatory again, with Haryana announcing bringing back a fine for violators.

The authority is also likely to take a decision on the protocol for Covid-19 outbreaks in schools, which health experts have repeatedly warned should not be shut, arguing that closing institutions is an inefficient strategy to fend off outbreaks and would also only exacerbate learning gaps caused over the course of the pandemic.

## **WHO about COVID Report**

### **An honest reckoning: On simmering dispute between India and WHO about COVID deaths (The Hindu:20220420)**

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/an-honest-reckoning-on-simmering-dispute-between-india-and-who-about-covid-deaths/article65335642.ece>

India must get experts to independently investigate excess deaths

The visit of Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, to Gujarat for the Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit coincides with a simmering dispute between India and WHO on its forthcoming report on excess COVID-19 deaths between 2020 and 2021. In 2020, the organisation had computed three million deaths globally from the pandemic, much more than the 1.8 million officially reported by countries. It was due to update this estimate for 2021 by the year-end but could not, and reports suggest, because of ‘stalling’ by India. A report in The New York Times claims that WHO estimates India accounted for four million deaths, or about eight times the current official toll of 5.2 lakh. The report drew a sharp response from the Centre, with the Health Ministry criticising WHO’s use of mathematical extrapolation and assumptions that did not capture ground realities in India and its reliance on ‘unverified’ data sources. WHO is set to release its estimates for most countries in the near future but the disclosure of India’s displeasure again shines the light on a long-standing discomfort with independent estimates of the death toll. A high death toll undermines India’s official discourse that it has performed better than several western countries with better developed health infrastructure.

While India has traditionally been a laggard in health statistics, largely due to the wide disparity in health services across States, it has, in recent years, improved medical registration of deaths to as much as 86% in 2018. States such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Mizoram, for instance, have nearly 100% death registration; but even in these States, the percentage of certified deaths ascribing a cause is lower. States such as Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh have less than 50% and even fewer certified deaths. The infectious, pervasive nature of the pandemic continues to strain and overwhelm the most resilient health systems and there will never be an exact count of the toll. While it is possible that researchers could use indirect methods that may overestimate the toll, it is indefensible on India’s part to maintain that its official estimates offer a more accurate picture. While it may be years before the true numbers are known, India should view death estimates not as an indictment but as a marker for future generations that they may be better equipped and so invest appropriately to improve preparedness against inevitable blights. India must also officially commission a team of experts, supply them with the best available data, and have them independently investigate excess deaths, publishing their methods and numbers, without fear or favour, in reputed journals. This would go a long way in burnishing India’s health credentials.

## **Covaxin trials**

### **Covaxin trials in U.S. put on hold (The Hindu:20220420)**

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/us-fda-puts-on-hold-covaxins-phase-23-clinical-trials/article65321272.ece>

WHO had announced suspension of the vaccine supplies through UN procurement agencies

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) has put on hold the phase 2/3 clinical trials of Bharat Biotech's COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin in the U.S.

Bharat Biotech's partner in the U.S. Ocugen in a release said it was informed by the USFDA that its phase 2/3 immuno-bridging and broadening study for Covaxin (BBV152), OCU-002, had been placed on clinical hold.

## **Omicron variant**

### **Continuing to monitor 'several descendent lineages' of Omicron variant: WHO (The Hindu:20220420)**

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/continuing-to-monitor-several-descendent-lineages-of-omicron-variant-who/article65316988.ece>

The Rajiv Gandhi General Hospital, Chennai, which had experienced tumultuous days with teeming corona patients since the start of the coronavirus pandemic first wave, has now silently recorded A DAY WITHOUT CORONA PATIENTS, seen on empty beds at Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital in Chennai.

The Rajiv Gandhi General Hospital, Chennai, which had experienced tumultuous days with teeming corona patients since the start of the coronavirus pandemic first wave, has now silently recorded A DAY WITHOUT CORONA PATIENTS, seen on empty beds at Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital in Chennai. | Photo Credit: JOTHI RAMALINGAM B

WHO said that it is working with scientists to further assess the characteristics of these lineages and their public health implications.

The World Health Organisation has said that it is continuing to monitor "several descendent lineages" of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus, including two new sublineages that have additional mutations associated with potential "immune escape characteristics." The COVID-19 Weekly Epidemiological Update, released by WHO on Tuesday, said that the Omicron variant remains the dominant variant circulating globally.

WHO said it continues to monitor several descendent lineages under the Omicron Variant of Concern, including BA.1, BA.2, BA.3 as well as now BA.4 and BA.5. It also includes BA.1/BA.2 circulating recombinant forms, such as XE.

"A small number of sequences of BA.4 and BA.5 descendent lineages have now been detected in a few countries. Both have additional mutations in the Spike region (S:L452R, S:F486V) and unique mutations outside of Spike. The S:L452R and S:F486V mutations are associated with potential immune escape characteristics," the global health organisation said.

It added that it is working with scientists to further assess the characteristics of these lineages and their public health implications. "WHO recommends countries to continue surveillance,

where possible, and rapid data sharing on publicly available databases.” According to WHO, the SARS-CoV-2 virus continues to evolve. With such intense transmission worldwide, further variants, including recombinants, will emerge. “This is expected.” WHO is tracking the two new sublineages (BA.4 and BA.5) as part of the Omicron variant.

These variants have additional mutations that need to be further studied to understand their impact on immune escape potential. Only a few dozen sequences of these variants have been reported from a handful of countries.

WHO is working with scientists to better understand their current spread as well as any potential impact they may have.

WHO said that Omicron’s properties of immune escape have been associated with the rapid and almost synchronous increase in the global incidence of COVID-19 cases reported until the end of January 2022.

A further increase observed at the beginning of March was driven primarily by a delayed increase in case incidences in the Western Pacific Region and a rebound in the number of new cases reported in the European Region.

"This trend was likely due to a combination of factors, including the predominance of the Omicron Pango lineages BA.1, and then BA.2, with a transmission advantage over other Omicron lineages; relaxation of public health and social measures (PHSM); and waning of humoral immunity following vaccination and/or prior infection," it said.

"The recent detection of emerging recombinants of the Delta-Omicron and Omicron descendent lineages requires ongoing close monitoring." The WHO update added that globally, during the week of April 4 through 10, the number of new COVID-19 cases and deaths has continued to decline for a third consecutive week, with over 7 million cases and over 22,000 deaths reported, a decrease of 24 per cent and 18 per cent respectively, as compared to the previous week.

All regions reported decreasing trends in the number of new weekly cases and deaths. As of April 10, over 496 million confirmed cases and over 6 million deaths have been reported globally.

“These trends should be interpreted with caution as several countries are progressively changing their COVID-19 testing strategies, resulting in lower overall numbers of tests performed and consequently lower numbers of cases detected,” it said.

Over 11 billion vaccine doses have been distributed globally. WHO however noted that substantial inequities remain, with only 11 per cent of those in low-income countries (LICs) having completed the primary series; and major differences among regions, with vaccination coverage ranging from 82 per cent in the Western Pacific Region to 13 per cent in the African Region.

“There is particular concern about reaching the most vulnerable populations who remain unvaccinated, particularly those of older age and those with comorbidities,” it said, adding that globally, an estimated 35 per cent of those aged 60 years and over are awaiting completion of the primary vaccination series.

## **How long does menopause last?**

**The “pause” in the term “menopause” might suggest that this phase of life is brief or temporary, little more than an annoying interruption. But in reality, the symptoms associated with menopause can last for a decade or more, and at least one symptom may never get better (The Indiann Express:20220420)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/how-long-does-menopause-last-7876213/>

MenopauseThe symptoms associated with menopause can last for a decade or more, and at least one symptom may never get better, health care providers say. ( Source: Aileen Son/The New York Times)

Written by Alice Callahan

(Science Times: Ask Well)

How long does menopause actually last? And how do you know when (or if) you are done?

The “pause” in the term “menopause” might suggest that this phase of life is brief or temporary, little more than an annoying interruption. But in reality, the symptoms associated with menopause can last for a decade or more, and at least one symptom may never get better.

Technically, menopause begins after a woman’s final menstrual period, said Dr. Stephanie Faubion, director of Mayo Clinic Women’s Health. But because there’s no sounding trumpet to mark your final period, and menstrual cycles are often irregular during this time, health providers won’t usually diagnose menopause until you’ve gone a full year with no periods, Faubion explained. “Then, you’re postmenopausal for the rest of your life,” which may be as much as one-third to one-half of a woman’s life span, she noted.

In the United States, the average age of the final menstrual period is 52, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. But anything older than 45 is considered normal, and about 95% of women reach this milestone by age 55, said Faubion, who is also medical director of the North American Menopause Society.

ALSO READ |Heart disease risk and depression: a new study explores whether the two may be linked

However, the symptoms of menopause can begin several years before a woman’s final period and continue for years afterward. The intensity and duration of symptoms can vary a great deal, Faubion noted; some women experience little bother and others find that symptoms interfere significantly with their lives and work.

The first sign that you are entering the menopausal transition is usually a change in your menstrual cycles; periods can become closer together or further apart, and bleeding may be lighter or heavier, said Siobán Harlow, director of the Center for Midlife Science at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. These changes can be unpredictable and

unnerving, and in women who experience heavier periods, it's possible to have a dangerous amount of blood loss, warranting medical care, Harlow said.

At the same time, fluctuations in estrogen can cause someone to “start having hot flashes and night sweats, or get a migraine headache, or not sleep well, or feel super irritable,” Faubion said. Then, they might have a few normal cycles and a respite in symptoms, followed by a resurgence, she said. An array of other symptoms can also occur with the menopausal transition, including depression, anxiety, brain fog, changes to skin and hair, joint pain and vaginal dryness.

Once you go 60 days without bleeding, you're in what is known as the late menopausal transition; from here, most women will have their final period within two years, said Dr. Nanette Santoro, a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. In this stage, she said, “symptoms tend to ramp up, so if they were annoying in the early transition, they get a little worse.”

Hot flashes, sometimes accompanied by night sweats, are among the most common menopausal symptoms, experienced by as many as 80% of women. In one 2015 study of about 1,500 U.S. women who experienced frequent hot flashes or night sweats, these symptoms lasted for an average of 7.4 years in all, usually beginning several years before their final period and continuing for an average of 4.5 years afterward. Women who began experiencing hot flashes earlier in the menopausal transition — before they hit the milestone of 60 days without a period — had to put up with these symptoms for longer, a total of 11.8 years on average. “If it begins early, it can be a very long, annoying menopause,” Santoro said, and given this, “you may want to seek help sooner rather than later.”

Of several racial and ethnic groups included in the 2015 study, women of Japanese and Chinese descent had the shortest duration of hot flash symptoms (an average of 4.8 and 5.4 years), and Black women had the longest, with an average of 10.1 years. In a study published in February, Harlow and her colleagues reviewed evidence that Black women in the United States also had, on average, earlier menopause and a greater incidence of depression and sleep disturbance associated with menopause when compared with white women. The authors proposed that these disparities could be linked, at least in part, to greater financial strain and life stress, experiences with discrimination and less physical activity — all of which, the authors noted in the study, “have roots in systemic racism.”

Most menopausal symptoms will eventually subside after an average of seven to nine years, but about a third of women will have symptoms for a decade or longer, Faubion said. A health care provider who is well versed in menopause can help you navigate treatment options, including hormone therapy, which can make symptoms much more manageable, she added.

One symptom that typically doesn't get better is vaginal dryness, which can also be accompanied by painful sex, greater urinary urgency and more frequent urinary tract infections, Faubion said. These symptoms worsen with time, so it's worth seeking treatment promptly. This may include over-the-counter lubricants or moisturizers or prescription vaginal estrogen treatments, she said.

**ALSO READ** | [World Liver Day 2022: Expert answers frequently asked questions](#)

Once you hit menopause, Santoro said, you're technically in it for life. But you'll know you're done with the changes of menopause when its other symptoms improve. “They just go away,”

and some women describe a feeling of “postmenopausal zest” at this stage, Santoro said. The hormonal fluctuations settle, and by the time women reach age 65 or 70, they are dealing more with the changes of aging than with changes in reproductive hormones, Harlow said.

And there are several upsides to going through menopause. Painful conditions like fibroids and endometriosis often improve, for example, and you no longer need to worry about periods or getting pregnant, Faubion said; though she emphasized that sexually transmitted infections remain a risk and a reason to keep condoms in your life.

In this sense, menopause is truly a midlife passage — and while it can be longer and stormier than expected — you can look forward to relief on the other side.

## **Ankylosing spondylitis**

### **Ankylosing spondylitis in women: Here’s what you need to know**

**Regular physical exercise, infection prevention, early treatment, avoiding smoking and alcohol, and consuming a healthier diet can help slow down the progression of the condition, a doctor says (The Indian Express:20220420)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/ankylosing-spondylitis-women-health-7873230/>

women health, women neck pain, Ankylosing spondylitis, Ankylosing spondylitis in women, what is Ankylosing spondylitis, what causes Ankylosing spondylitis, indian express news AS is a chronic systemic inflammatory rheumatic disease affecting the spine, sacroiliac joints, hips, shoulders, peripheral joints, and sites of attachment of ligaments and tendons. (Photo: Getty/Thinkstock)

Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) is a chronic systemic inflammatory rheumatic disease affecting the spine, sacroiliac joints, hips, shoulders, peripheral joints, and sites of attachment of ligaments and tendons. It can also involve other organs like eyes, lungs, aorta, heart, and kidneys, explains Dr Ashit Syngle, senior consultant physician and rheumatologist, Fortis Multispecialty Hospital, Mohali.

According to the doctor, while the prevalence in India is about less than 1 per cent of the population, the disease affects the quality of life in women.

ALSO READ |World Liver Day 2022: Signs that all is not well with your liver

“AS commonly occurs in people between the ages of 17 and 45 years. In some cases, the diagnosis has been as early as in their adolescence. The age of onset is about the same in men and women. Women, however, are diagnosed at a later stage because of the misconception that it primarily affects men, delaying treatment,” he says, adding that the disease can be treated with the help of modern medication, which allows patients to lead a healthy and productive life.

What women need to know

Different immunological, hormonal, and genetic responses in women with AS are responsible for different disease manifestations.

ALSO READ |Amid surge in fibromyalgia cases in Covid patients, experts share symptoms and tips to stay safe

### 1. Presentation and delay in diagnosis

There are known differences in clinical symptoms reported by female patients. Some of these are a low frequency of typical inflammatory back pain, more prominent upper thoracic and neck or widespread pain, along with less severe or slower progression of radiographic damage, says Dr Syngle.

There is a similar disease called ‘non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis’ which has identical symptoms but without causing radiographic damage — that is joint destruction and systematic bone loss. This condition is more common in women and patients who have suffered from extensive pain and are twice as likely to have a delayed diagnosis, he adds.

“Radiological progression in women is slower as compared to men. Women seem to have higher progression in the cervical spine and men in the lumbar spine. This leads to delayed diagnosis and even misdiagnosis. Women, therefore, have a higher disease burden and are significantly less responsive to treatment.”

women health, women neck pain, Ankylosing spondylitis, Ankylosing spondylitis in women, what is Ankylosing spondylitis, what causes Ankylosing spondylitis, indian express news Typical inflammatory back pain, more prominent upper thoracic and neck or widespread pain are symptoms. (Photo: Getty/Thinkstock)

### 2. Extra-articular manifestations

Apart from musculoskeletal tissues, AS can also involve other organs. Women frequently have enthesitis (inflammation at sites of attachment of ligaments and tendons) and intestinal involvement (inflammatory bowel disease or IBD), whereas male patients may have anterior uveitis more frequently, the doctor explains.

ALSO READ |Count on these easy-to-follow Ayurvedic remedies to help manage joint pain

### 3. Treatment response and drug adherence

The treatment response may vary among genders. Treatment efficacy of certain biologic drugs is significantly lower in women with AS, and hence they are noted to have a significantly lower drug adherence. The goal of treatment is to manage symptoms and prevent structural damage.

### Reproductive and mental health

According to Dr Syngle, even though AS does not directly affect a woman’s fertility, it does affect them during their peak reproductive years. “It is advisable that women with AS who are pregnant or trying to conceive should work with their doctors to find the right medications to manage inflammation. They are also more likely to suffer from psychological conditions like

anxiety and depression. In such circumstances, one may find help from professionals, friends, family, or support groups,” he says.

## **World Liver Day 2022**

### **World Liver Day 2022: Signs that all is not well with your liver Fluid retention is the most common sign of liver disease, appearing in 50 per cent of people who have cirrhosis(The Indiann Express:20220420)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/world-liver-day-2022-signs-liver-health-symptoms-7876242/>

World Liver Day 2022, World Liver Day, liver health, healthy liver, unhealthy liver, signs of an unhealthy liver, cirrhosis, liver cirrhosis, health, indian express news When your liver is unable to filter toxins, they may travel to your brain. The resulting condition, known as 'hepatic encephalopathy'. (Photo: Getty/Thinkstock)

The liver is one of the most important organs that helps with digesting food and ridding your body of toxic substances. According to Dr Prashant Shinde, consultant paediatric gastroenterologist and hepatologist at Yashoda Hospitals Hyderabad, liver problems can be caused due to a variety of factors such as viruses, alcohol use, obesity, and inherited (genetic) issues.

“With time, conditions that damage this organ can lead to scarring (cirrhosis), which in turn can cause liver failure, a life-threatening condition. But, early treatment may give the liver time to heal,” he says.

ALSO READ |World Liver Day 2022: Expert answers frequently asked questions

On the occasion of World Liver Day today, Dr Shinde lists four of the most common signs of liver failure and the possible treatments. Read on.

#### 1. Fluid retention

Per the doctor, this is the most common sign of liver disease, appearing in 50 per cent of people who have cirrhosis, a condition in which scar tissue replaces healthy liver tissue. Accumulating fluid may cause “distension in your abdomen or swelling in your legs”.

“This happens when high blood pressure develops in your liver veins or when your liver is unable to make albumin protein that prevents leaks from your bloodstream into tissue”.

Treatment options: A low-sodium diet may help alleviate mild fluid retention. For moderate-to-severe retention, your doctor may prescribe diuretics, commonly known as ‘urine pills’. Severe cases often call for paracentesis, using a needle to drain abdominal fluid.

ALSO READ |Eight simple tips to keep your liver healthy

## 2. Jaundice

It causes darker urine and a yellowish tint in skin or the whites of your eyes. It happens when bilirubin, a pigment that forms when red blood cells break down, builds up in your bloodstream. A healthy liver absorbs bilirubin and converts it into bile. Your body then excretes it in stool. When the liver is sick, it may not function optimally, the doctor explains.

Treatment options: Jaundice is a one of the signs of liver failure; if you have it, your doctor may evaluate you for a liver transplant depending on the cause.

World Liver Day 2022, World Liver Day, liver health, healthy liver, unhealthy liver, signs of an unhealthy liver, cirrhosis, liver cirrhosis, health, indian express news Cirrhosis creates an opportunity for bleeding in the liver. (Photo: Getty/Thinkstock)

## 3. Bleeding

Dr Shinde says the liver typically cycles about 25 per cent of blood from the portal vein. But cirrhosis creates an opportunity for bleeding. The patient may vomit blood or notice blood in stool or rectal bleeding.

“Usually, the flow through the liver is like driving through a highway — it’s rapid. But, when you have cirrhosis, that highway, because of scarring, becomes a bumpy road. Consequently, the blood tries to find detours, which send it to the spleen that enlarges as it tries to relieve the congestion. Varicose veins may develop in your esophagus and stomach.

ALSO READ |Born without a food pipe, a 22-month-old boy from Oman was treated in a Hyderabad hospital

“A healthy liver produces clotting proteins. But, a sick liver can’t. An enlarged spleen collects platelets from your bloodstream. A low platelet count makes you more susceptible to nosebleeds and bleeding gums.”

Treatment options: If you’re vomiting blood, go to the emergency room. Doctors will evaluate and stop your bleeding using an upper gastrointestinal endoscopy. If bleeding is severe, they may implant a stent to connect veins running in and out of your liver and create a new pathway for blood.

## 4. Confusion

When your liver is unable to filter toxins, they may travel to your brain. The resulting condition, known as ‘hepatic encephalopathy’, can cause confusion, memory problems, lethargy, and coma.

Treatment options: The standard treatment is the laxative lactulose; it binds to toxins in the colon and flushes them out before they get into your bloodstream. Next level is a liver transplant.

Four tips for keeping your liver healthy:

1. Exercise at least five times a week for at least 30 minutes.

2. Eat a healthy diet that is low in refined sugars, processed foods, sweets, sodas, and refined carbohydrates. Choose fruits, vegetables and high-fibre foods.
3. Avoid alcohol.
4. Maintain a healthy weight.

## **Ayush products**

**Huge demand for Ayush products, services; market size has crossed \$18 billion: Ayush Secretary Ahead of the Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit 2022 beginning in Gandhinagar on April 20, Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, says India has the potential to become a health and wellness hub, attracting investments and creating additional jobs. (The Indian Express:20220420)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/huge-demand-for-ayush-products-services-market-size-has-crossed-18-billion-ayush-secretary-7876349/>

Written by Anuradha Mascarenhas | Pune |  
April 19, 2022 4:00:20 pm

Kotecha, a former Vice Chancellor of Gujarat Ayurveda University, Jamnagar, said there is a huge demand for Ayush products and services worldwide.

Ahead of the Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit 2022 beginning in Gandhinagar on April 20, Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, said the market size of AYUSH — Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy, the six Indian systems of medicine — grew to \$18.1 billion between 2014 and 2020.

Kotecha, a former Vice Chancellor of Gujarat Ayurveda University, Jamnagar, said there is a huge demand for Ayush products and services worldwide, and that an Ayush Export Promotion Council would be launched at the summit to promote exports in the Ayush sector.

Excerpts from an exclusive interview with ‘The Indian Express’:

Concerted efforts are being made to promote traditional systems of medicine. What are the challenges in the way?

A holistic patient-centred and individualised approach is the specialty of Ayurveda, and enables the patient-physician partnership to design or customise treatment and lifestyle advice in order to achieve the highest potential for well-being.

This awareness, combined with the increase in the publicly reported use of traditional medicine, has brought traditional medicine systems to the fore. The Government of India created a full-fledged Ministry of Ayush on November 9, 2014 with a mandate to promote and propagate Indian systems of medicine and homoeopathy. The ministry is committed to infuse the wisdom

of traditional medicine with the methodologies of modern science; scientifically validating the systems and presenting them in the scientific idiom, relating their efficacy to modern lifestyles.

Read |PM Modi to open Gandhinagar Ayush summit in WHO chief's presence  
What is the focus at the new WHO centre of Traditional Medicine at Jamnagar?

The Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) will focus on four main strategic areas: evidence and learning; data and analytics; sustainability and equity; and innovation and technology to optimise the contribution of traditional medicine to global health.

GCTM is not a regional centre of the World Health Organisation (WHO), but will be the first and only global centre (office) for traditional medicine in the world. It will focus on building a solid evidence base for policies and standards on traditional medicine practices and products, and help countries integrate it as appropriate into their health systems and regulate its quality and safety for optimal and sustainable impact.

The summit aims at increasing investments and showcasing innovations in the field of traditional medicine. It is a unique attempt to foster long-lasting partnerships, boost exports, and nurture a sustainable ecosystem.

What has been the impact in the eight years since the creation of the Ayush ministry? What is planned at the upcoming summit?

The sector has seen a substantial increase in the market size. There has been a paradigm shift in the health-seeking attitude of the public toward Ayush systems. The market size of Ayush has grown in 2014-20 to reach \$18.1 billion. There is a huge demand for Ayush products and services worldwide.

The Global Ayush Innovation and Investment Summit in Gandhinagar will directly affect investment in the traditional medicine sector in India. India has the potential to become a health and wellness hub, attracting investments and creating additional jobs. Various stakeholders like Pharma industries, FMCG industries, innovators, entrepreneurs, farmers, etc. are converging for better linkages and tie-ups; many MoUs will be signed.

An Ayush Export Promotion Council will be launched during the summit, which will act as an enabler for promoting exports in the Ayush sector. We are committed to making India the favourite destination for medical value travel, and providing Ayush human resource to the world for Ayush-based medical health under the 'Heal in India' initiative.

Read |Global Centre for Traditional Medicine Indian systems have won hearts all over the world, says Sonowal

What role did traditional medicine systems play during the Covid-19 pandemic?

The Ministry of Ayush (MoA), Government of India, has undertaken several R&D and public health initiatives to harness the potential of Ayush systems to contain the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The MoA collaborated with several research organisations to encourage, promote and advance evidence-based research on Ayush systems. There were well-designed clinical studies and pre-clinical studies in collaboration with reputed institutes like CSIR, ICMR, AIIMS Jodhpur,

KGMU Lucknow, MGIMS Wardha and DBT on Ayush interventions as standalone or adjunct to standard of care in asymptomatic and mild to moderate Covid-19 patients.

Ayush interventions — AYUSH-64 and Kabasura Kudineer — were repurposed based on promising results of research studies for the management of asymptomatic, mild to moderate Covid-19 as standalone and add-on intervention with standard care, and were distributed among the public benefitting more than 8 lakh population in drive mode. These have shown significant improvement in clinical recovery and duration of hospital stay without any progression of the disease to severe or critical stage.

Also, there was improvement in Quality of life (QoL) parameters and general well-being. As per a survey study covering over 1.35 crore population done through Sanjivani app, more than 89% population have reported to have benefited through Ayush system in Covid-19. The Ayush Ministry has also collaborated with the UK's London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to conduct a study on Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) for promoting recovery from Covid-19.

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ExplainSpeaking: Indian stock markets — what lies ahead?

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What is the roadmap for addressing opposition to the integration of traditional and modern systems of medicine?

India has a distinctive and unique traditional medicine base, with each system having their own philosophy, medicinal knowledge, perception, and practices. At present all these systems of healthcare along with modern medicine are being practised in India.

There is no point in replacing any system of healthcare. Rather, we are working towards better synergy among all healthcare systems so that the best could reach the patient. Efforts are also underway on many fronts to integrate all healthcare systems. There are many instances and successful integration stories of Ayush which would enable strategic integration into public health at large.

This integration has been realised through coordination and collaboration at various levels of healthcare between the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Ayush. The National Ayush Mission is an example of such elaborate integration, wherein health and wellness centres (HWCs) are being established across the country. Another effort at integration can be seen in the integration of Ayush systems in the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases & Stroke (NPCDCS), wherein the implementation was done through collaboration of the Ayush Research Councils with the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Such integration has enabled enhancing the functional communication and exchange of information among the different streams of medicine. The Ministry of Ayush and AIIMS together established The Department of Integrative Medicine at AIIMS, which is a remarkable initiative under the Centre of Excellence scheme of the Ministry of Ayush.

Efforts are underway to set up integrated Ayush cancer care facilities at the National Cancer Institute at Jhajjar. Signing MoUs for 'undertaking collaborative research' to boost the acceptability of Ayush systems at the international level can also be seen as a directed effort for the development of Ayush systems as well as widening the scope of integration.

🔊 The above article is for information purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the guidance of your doctor or other qualified health professional for any questions you may have regarding your health or a medical condition.

## **World Liver Day 2022**

**World Liver Day 2022: Simple diet and lifestyle tips to improve liver health "Poor lifestyles, unhealthy eating habits, and the presence of dangerous pesticides, heavy metals in food can over-stress the liver," Dr Vinoda Kumary said (The Indiann Express:20220420)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/world-liver-day-2022-lifestyle-measures-tips-liver-health-diet-weight-exercise-yoga-7876028/>

liverLiver is responsible for performing the most crucial functions related to digestion, immunity, storage of absorbed nutrients, excretion and metabolism (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

The second largest organ in the body, liver plays a crucial role in digestion, making it absolutely essential to take care of it. To raise awareness about the same and the various liver-related diseases, World Liver Day is observed on April 19, every year.

According to Dr Ashutosh Niranjana, dean and professor, General Surgery, Noida International Institute of Medical Sciences, "The liver is responsible for performing the most crucial functions related to digestion, immunity, storage of absorbed nutrients, excretion and metabolism. Keeping your liver in good shape is the key to preventing liver diseases."

The liver, however, doesn't show immediate signs and symptoms of deterioration unless damaged severely. So, one must consult an expert in case of nausea, vomiting, pain in the upper abdomen, and symptoms of jaundice, the expert said.

ALSO READ |World Liver Day 2022: Expert answers frequently asked questions

Talking about the common factors harming liver health, Dr Vinoda Kumary, deputy chief medical officer, Jindal Naturecure Institute added, "For most people, it does not function optimally as it is overburdened with both environmental and dietary toxins. Poor lifestyles, unhealthy eating habits, and the presence of dangerous pesticides and heavy metals in food are factors responsible for over-stressing our liver."

Here are a few safe and effective habits that will keep your liver healthy, according to Dr Kumary.

#### Have a liver and gut-friendly diet

Your diet should be balanced, healthy and must contain nutrients that promote gut and liver health. “A 6 per cent reduction in body weight can reduce the fat levels in your liver by up to 40 per cent, taking a massive load off the body’s detoxifying organ,” the expert said.

“Maintain ideal weight, avoid processed foods, addictive drinks like alcohol and caffeine, and consume more whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, sprouts, seeds, nuts, and beans. Drink 3 to 4 litres of water, as it promotes proper digestion and helps the lymphatic system function optimally.”

diet Your diet should be balanced and healthy and must contain nutrients that promote gut and liver health. (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

#### Try intermittent fasting

“Once you have overhauled your diet regimen, you can try intermittent fasting once every week,” she suggested. She added that during fasts, the liver cells produce a protein that helps improve sugar metabolism and reduce the levels of fat. Fasting also promotes autophagy, which is when the healthy cells in the body eat up the unhealthy cells, promoting cellular detox.

#### Use supplements strategically

“Certain supplements have shown to support liver health by reducing inflammation, guarding the body against injuries from toxins or chemicals, stimulating the production of bile, and more,” Dr Kumary said. She also suggested having buttermilk as it has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. “Studies have shown that it helps regenerate liver cells and protects it from damage caused by harmful substances like acetaminophen and alcohol. It also boosts levels of glutathione, which is a potent antioxidant that fights free radical damage.”

Similarly, turmeric protects the liver from injury by reducing oxidative stress and increasing the production of glutathione. It also stimulates the production of bile, which is responsible for digesting fats in our small intestine.

yoga liver health Yoga asanas offer several benefits, including detoxification. (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

#### Sweat session

There are two ways to get rid of the toxins in your body. The first method is to improve the functioning of the liver, and the second method is to sweat them out, according to Dr Kumary. The skin is the largest organ in our body, and sweating is the most effective way to get toxins out of your system.

ALSO READ |Is disinfectant use during pregnancy linked to childhood asthma, eczema? Here’s what experts say

#### Yoga

Yoga offers several benefits, including detoxification. With twist variations and proper alignment, you can significantly improve digestion and detoxify your liver, which will help remove toxins from your body. She suggested performing Marichyasana as it is “very effective in massaging the internal organs and promoting optimal function”.

Additionally, Dr Niranjan asked to take special care if you have Hepatitis B and C by avoiding unnecessary sharing of toothbrushes, razors, needles, and other personal care items. “Follow the prescribed medicines routine and get the vaccination for Hepatitis A and B done,” he said.

## **Heart disease risk and depression**

### **Heart disease risk and depression: a new study explores whether the two may be linked**

**When the authors analysed the data by gender, they found that at baseline, women with higher cardiovascular risk were more likely to exhibit symptoms of depression. But this was not the case in men, and not in either men or women at follow up(The Indiann Express:20220420)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/heart-disease-risk-depression-new-study-link-7870820/>

mental healthGeneral anxiety and depression are the most common reasons patients seek support, but family and relationship issues also dominate therapy conversations. (Representative Image) (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

For generations, people have been fascinated by the links between mind and body. For example, do people really die of a broken heart? Does a healthy mind indicate a healthy body?

Scientists have been studying the associations between mental and physical health for some time. One such association is between depression and heart disease. Research has shown that depression is more common among people with heart disease compared to the general population.

ALSO READ |Research says heart disease risk from saturated fats may depend on what foods they come from

Further, in people who are physically healthy, when followed over many years, those with elevated depressive symptoms are more likely to develop heart disease than those who don't have depression.

We also know that in people with acute heart disease (for example, they've had a heart attack), having depression is associated with increased risk of further heart attacks and death, not only from heart disease, but from any cause.

However, fewer studies have investigated whether these trends exist in reverse that is, whether cardiovascular risk factors are associated with a higher likelihood of developing depression. But now, a new study published in the journal PLOS ONE has sought to explore this.

What the researchers did

Sandra Martn-Pelez from the University of Granada in Spain and her colleagues focused on people with metabolic syndrome to explore the link between cardiovascular risk factors and depression in people aged between 55 and 75.

ALSO READ | Study suggests insomnia increases cardiovascular risk by 16 per cent; here's what to know

Metabolic syndrome is a group of conditions that occur together including high blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist, and elevated cholesterol and which increase a person's risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. Some researchers have suggested that metabolic syndrome may play a role in depression, too.

heart attack Smoking is a leading cause of heart attack among young people. (Source: getty images)

The participants in this study were drawn from a broader trial analysing the effects of a Mediterranean diet on people who are overweight or obese, and who have metabolic syndrome. The ongoing randomised trial consists of one group following a calorie-restricted Mediterranean diet and a physical activity programme, and another group following an unrestricted Mediterranean diet without a physical activity programme.

More than 6,500 participants were included in the baseline analysis for the PLOS ONE study, with over 4,500 followed up two years later. The researchers used the well-established Framingham risk score, which was developed by following healthy people over time to determine the major risk factors for heart disease. They categorised people as low-, medium-, or high-risk for having a heart attack or dying from heart disease within ten years.

Participants were asked about their depressive symptoms using questionnaires at baseline (when they began following the diets and physical activity programmes) and then two years later.

Surprisingly, no significant association was found between cardiovascular risk and depression at baseline or follow-up. So, overall, participants with a higher risk of heart disease were not more likely to have or develop depression.

When the authors analysed the data by gender, they found that at baseline, women with higher cardiovascular risk were more likely to exhibit symptoms of depression. But this was not the case in men, and not in either men or women at follow up.

On average, all participants' depression scores reduced at two years. Depression scores dropped more for those who had low cardiovascular risk, and for those in the intervention group (participants who were following the restricted diet and the physical activity programme).

stress Learn to manage your stress. (Photo: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

It's difficult to clearly interpret the findings of this study. The data has been analysed in several different ways, and there are some mixed results. For example, the authors analysed the data

by different metabolic syndrome factors, finding that diabetes and certain cholesterol levels resulted in lower depression scores at follow-up.

ALSO READ |Extreme climatic events may cause anxiety, depression: IPCC report  
But we do know from other research that women with heart disease have higher levels of depression than men with heart disease. It's also well-established that in the general population, women experience higher rates of depression than men. So the finding that there may be a link between heart disease risk and depression in women seems to align with these trends.

Why are depression and heart disease linked?

Although we can't conclude from this study that heart disease risk is associated with a higher risk of developing depression, it does add to an already strong body of evidence suggesting heart disease and depression are linked.

A number of factors, behavioural and biological, may explain this relationship. Some of the biological factors common to both depression and heart disease risk include:

increased inflammation

endothelial dysfunction (constriction of blood vessels in the heart)

altered autonomic nervous system activity (the autonomic nervous system controls muscles, including the heart)

blood platelet dysfunction (where blood platelets are more likely to stick together and form clots).

Also, we know that healthy lifestyle factors, such as doing physical activity, not smoking and maintaining a healthy diet, are protective against both heart disease and depression. The opposite is also true unhealthy lifestyle factors are associated with increased risk of heart disease and depression.

ALSO READ |Economists comparing current crisis with Great Depression: What was it?

Unfortunately, people with depression find it more difficult to change these sorts of habits, for example, to quit smoking. So probably the most interesting finding of this study is that depression scores were reduced in the group who were encouraged and supported to adopt a healthier lifestyle, including a more restrictive diet and increased physical activity.

While there's good evidence to suggest that exercise is a very effective treatment for depression in people with heart disease, the role of diet as an intervention for depression is less clear. This study provides a promising impetus for more investigation of diet and lifestyle as potential depression treatments in those with and at risk of heart disease.

## भास्कर खास • जनवरी 2022 से 10 अप्रैल तक 1032 सैंपलों की जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग, सभी में मिला ओमिक्रॉन वैरिएंट कोरोना के केस और संक्रमण बढ़ी, जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग पर फोकस बढ़ाया ताकि नए वैरिएंट का पता चल सके

भास्कर न्यूज़ | नई दिल्ली

दिल्ली में एक बार फिर कोरोनावायरस के मामलों के साथ-साथ संक्रमण दर भी तेजी से बढ़ने लगी है। तेजी से बढ़ते हुए मामलों को देखते हुए अब फिर से सैंपलों की जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग पर फोकस किया जा रहा है। क्योंकि तीसरी लहर कम होने के बाद सैंपलों की जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग कम कर दी गई थी। फिलहाल लोकनायक जयप्रकाश नारायण(एनएनजेपी) अस्पताल और आईएलबीएस में सिक्वेंसिंग की जा रही है। इस संबंध में एनएनजेपी अस्पताल के मेडिकल डायरेक्टर डॉ. सुरेश कुमार का कहना है कि तीसरी वेव ठंडी पड़ गई थी, इसलिए जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग भी कम कर दी गई थी। तीसरी वेव के दौरान अस्पताल में संक्रमित पाए जा रहे सभी लोगों के सैंपल की सिक्वेंसिंग की जा रही थी, लेकिन फरवरी के अंत और मार्च में कोरोना के मामलों में राहत को देखते हुए 4 से 5 सैंपलों की ही सिक्वेंसिंग की जा रही थी, क्योंकि संक्रमित भी बहुत कम लोग आ रहे थे।

### जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग में अभी तक नहीं मिला है कोई नया वैरिएंट

उन्होंने कहा कि अब केस बढ़ रहे हैं, इसलिए पिछले कुछ दिनों से 30 सैंपलों की जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग की है और राहत की बात यह रही कि सभी सैंपलों में ओमिक्रॉन वैरिएंट ही पाया गया है, किसी नए वैरिएंट को पहचान नहीं हुई है। अब सिक्वेंसिंग की संख्या को और बढ़ाया जा रहा है। जितने भी मरीज दूसरी बीमारियों के चलते भर्ती हुए हैं, उनकी कोविड जांच की जा रही है और जो भी पॉजिटिव आ रहे हैं, उनके सैंपलों की जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग की जा रही है। एनएनजेपी अस्पताल से मिली जानकारी के मुताबिक इस वक्त 30 से 35 सैंपलों की सिक्वेंसिंग चल रही है, जिसकी रिपोर्ट अगले कुछ दिनों में आ जाएगी।

### आईएलबीएस में 10 से 15 सैंपलों की जांच बढ़ाई जा रही है जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग

वहीं आईएलबीएस में भी 10 से 15 सैंपलों की जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग चल रही है। स्वास्थ्य विभाग के अधिकारियों के मुताबिक बढ़ते केसों को देखते हुए सभी अस्पतालों को सतर्क रहने के निर्देश दिए गए हैं। साथ ही अस्पतालों में मरीज अधिक आने पर जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग बढ़ाने के लिए भी कहा गया है, ताकि किसी भी नए वैरिएंट का पता चल सके।

### जनवरी 2022 से मार्च तक 1,002 सैंपलों की गई जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग

सरकारी आंकड़ों के मुताबिक जनवरी 2022 से मार्च के बीच कोरोना के कारण जान गंवाने 578 लोगों के सैंपलों की जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग की गई थी, जिनमें से 560 सैंपलों में (करीब 97%) में ओमिक्रॉन ही पाया गया था। लैब में मार्च में 776 सैंपल पहुंचे थे, जिनमें से 442 सैंपलों की जीनोम सिक्वेंसिंग की जांच की जा सकी थी और इन सभी में ओमिक्रॉन पाया गया। अप्रैल में अभी तक 30 सैंपलों की सिक्वेंसिंग की गई थी, उनमें भी ओमिक्रॉन ही पाया गया है।