



# BETTER HEALTH

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The Better Health periodical is your guide to a sound body and mind, as we delve into the implications of a new post-pandemic world.

In this edition of our newsletter, we explore some essential vaccines for your child, the top few health concerns faced by women over 45, and signs of early puberty to spot in adolescents.

## The Road to Recovery

**The impact and implications of society in a post-pandemic world for new mothers, working mothers, and other primary caregivers**

The one thing in common between being a caregiver and living through the COVID-19 pandemic is that your life will never be the same again. Wading through life's tussles with a crying baby in your arms is no easy task; ask anyone and they will agree. Dealing with postnatal anxiety, breastfeeding issues, potential sickness, the fear of running out of resources, and other such uncertainties, are part and parcel of the journey of motherhood. As we acclimatize to the new normal, here are a few things to help get you going.

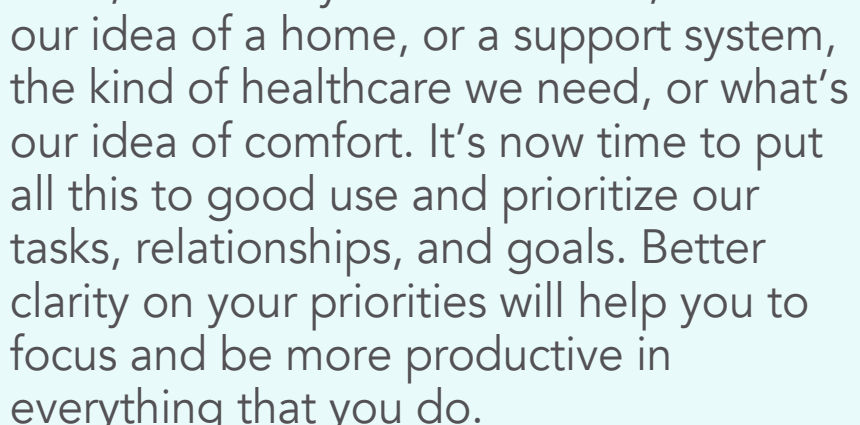
### Acknowledge your feelings

At a time when everything is opening up, children could be looking forward to returning to school and reconnecting with their friends and teachers. They could be excited or anxious about sports and performance arts, or as a working mom, you may feel similar jitters of nervousness about going back to work, or yet, starting out at a new workplace. Accept that all these feelings are valid, and that there are no right or wrong answers. Help your family members name their feelings that they might be feeling, truly hear them out and try to understand their point of view, so that they feel safe and validated.



### Postpartum depression for new mothers

Postpartum depression is the dark side of pregnancy for a lot of newly-turned moms. If you are unable to connect with the baby, the last thing you should do is blame yourself. Seeking the support of your partner, friends and family members can help you process your emotions better. If symptoms like irritability, uncontrolled crying, change in appetite, mood swings and troubled sleep show up and persist, it's a good idea to consult a counsellor.



### Prioritize your health

Whether you are working from home or are a homemaker, ensure that you and your family are getting the right nutrition, exercise, and timely vaccinations for immunization. On days when you're feeling anxious or overwhelmed emotionally, reach out to your loved ones for support and do not hesitate to seek the right professional help. Even something as abstract as a sense of sudden emptiness for empty nesters could lead to a legitimate health concern, if left unattended.

### Last but not the least, self-care

Hailed as the epitome of sacrifice, the quintessential Indian woman has often neglected her own needs to prioritize those of her family. However, now that we are talking about the new normal in practically every aspect of our lives, it would not hurt if women learnt to take better care of themselves without feeling apologetic about it. Whether you're a new mom, or entering your forties, or close to retirement, there's no better time to focus on your physical and mental health, as we usher in an era of a 'new kind of normal'.

### Rethinking what you value

If the pandemic has reminded us anything at all, it is how interdependent we all are. We've learnt plenty about what matters to us, who really cares about us, what's our idea of a home, or a support system, the kind of healthcare we need, or what's our idea of comfort. It's now time to put all this to good use and prioritize our tasks, relationships, and goals. Better clarity on your priorities will help you to focus and be more productive in everything that you do.

### Here are some prevalent medical conditions that women over the age of 45 should be watchful of -

BREAST CANCER	The most common form of cancer in women starts when cells in the breast begin to grow out of control. Breast cancer cells form a tumour that can be seen on an x-ray or felt as a lump. It is important to note here that breast lumps can also be benign, and not all of them are cancerous. Typically, breast cancer begins in the lactation glands. Common symptoms include small lumps on the breast, swelling, an inverted nipple, soreness, fluid discharge, or swelling around the collarbone and shoulder.	
OSTEOPOROSIS	Literally means "porous bone" since the bone is the living tissue that constantly gets renewed. Osteoporosis occurs when the body loses too much bone, or when the creation of new bone isn't aligned with the loss of old bone. With age, the body naturally has a harder time keeping up. This leads to weak and brittle bones that are at a greater risk of breaking. Symptoms may include poor posture, bones that break more easily than expected, a smaller frame, back pain, or genetic tendencies.	
DIABETES	Diabetes occurs when the body is unable to process sugar into energy, causing high blood glucose levels. This acts as a precursor to multiple health concerns such as obesity, kidney damage, and cardiovascular disease. Symptoms may include extreme hunger, increased urination, fatigue, and blurred vision.	
MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS	As women age, they witness struggles with mental health, especially depression. This can be attributed to losing a sense of purpose and coming to terms with getting older. Symptoms may include feeling constantly sad, insomnia or excessive sleeping, changes in appetite, loss of energy, feeling guilty, along with trouble concentrating, or making decisions. In such cases, one must communicate with their loved ones, and seek professional help.	
ARTHRITIS	A condition that is often overlooked, arthritis, is a disease that causes inflammation in the joints, especially the knees, ankles, elbows, and finger joints. Stiffness, pain, swelling, redness, and a decreased range of motion are commonly witnessed symptoms. The most common types of arthritis that women suffer from are Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, and Gout.	

The good news is that many of these conditions can be managed by making healthy lifestyle choices and getting treatment on time. Exercising caution and care can go a long way when you hit the big four-oh.

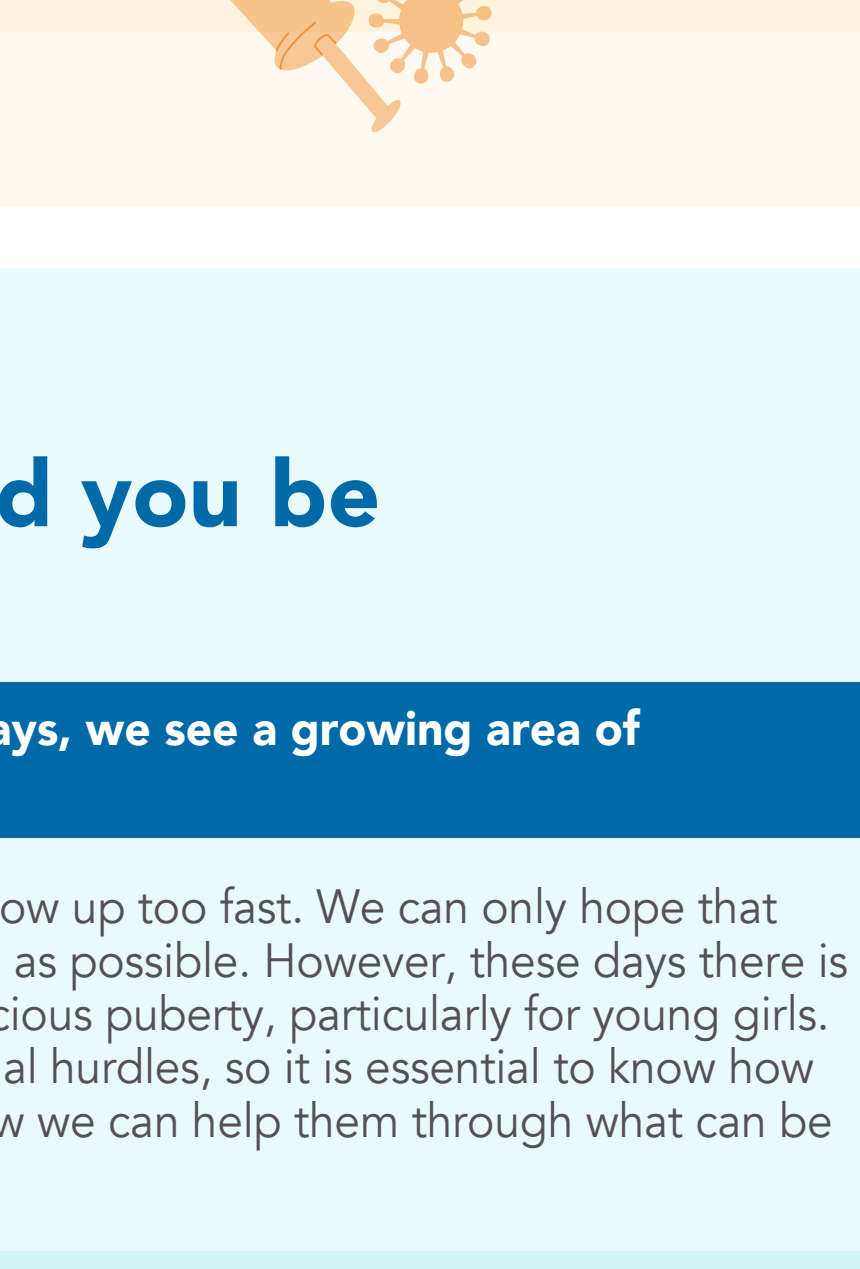
## Introducing Vaccines to Children

**Navigating through multiple avenues of information to understand what's really good for your child**

March 2020 brought significant amounts of change to our lives. Numbers, myths, tips and reports were thrown in our faces every day. So did the information on what's healthy, what's not, and what really boosts our immunity. In this post-pandemic era, the credibility of data has increasingly become the need of the hour. While parents and pediatricians all over the world have taken quite a cautious stance on inoculating the young ones, it is crucial to understand how much is too much.

### WHY DO WE NEED VACCINES?

Despite tremendous progress, infectious diseases continue to contribute to a significant proportion of child mortality and morbidity in India. According to WHO, 1.5 million deaths could be avoided globally, only if children were vaccinated. More than half of the world's most vulnerable children still miss out on the essential vaccines that they need to live healthy lives. It is important for parents to be aware of the various vaccinations their child will receive, to immunize them against certain diseases.

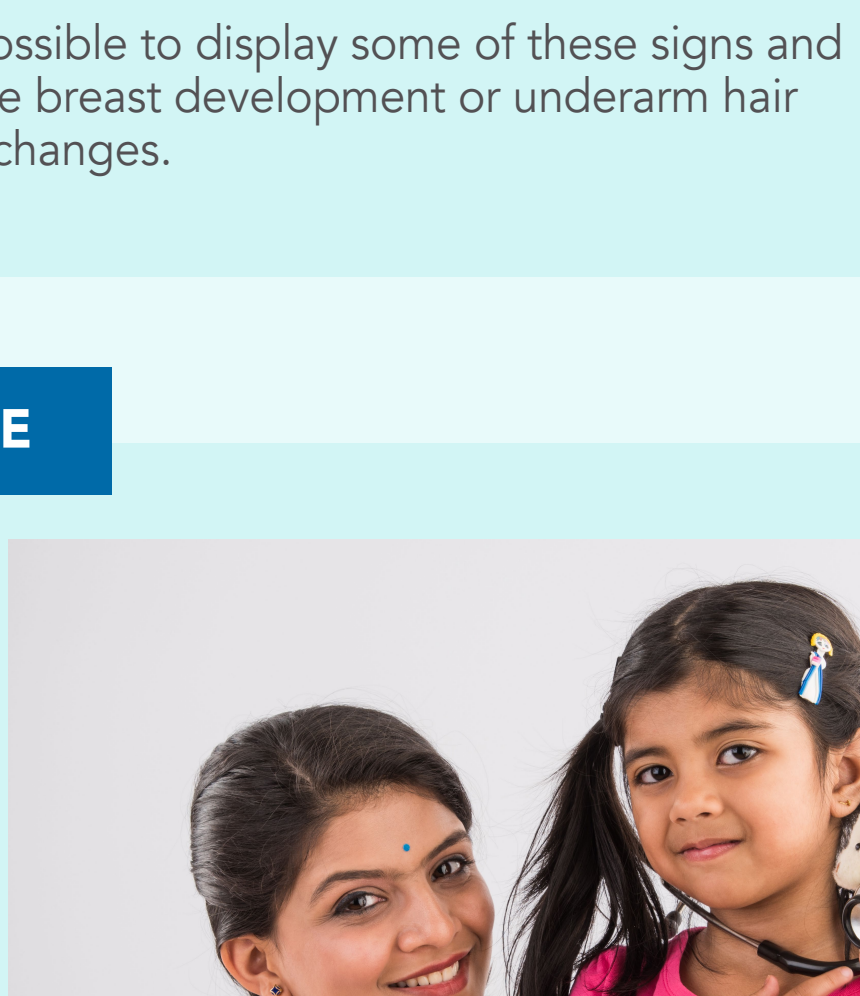


### SOME COMMON VACCINES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN



### GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

All countries in the world have an immunization programme to deliver selected vaccines to the targeted beneficiaries, especially focusing on pregnant women, infants and children, who are at a high risk of diseases preventable by vaccines. In India, the Universal Immunization Program (UIP) is one of the largest public health programmes targeting nearly 2.67 crore newborns and 2.9 crore pregnant women annually. The Government of India also frequently collaborates with international bodies like the WHO on issues related to vaccinations and viral health.



## Discover our expert healthcare from the comfort of your home

**Motherhood Hospitals is offering a range of services to make you healthier and happier**

### Vaccinations for children

Protecting your children is essential to be able to provide them with a healthy and fulfilling life. The road to good health begins with boosting your child's immunity and by vaccinating them to protect them from a variety of ailments. Our remote home-monitoring services by experts in children's health are here to help you nurse your child back to health.

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### Flu Vaccinations at your doorstep

The pandemic has disrupted the world, or what we knew of it. Since the COVID vaccine has not yet been tested for kids, we believe a flu vaccine is the next best way to protect your child. We, at Motherhood, recognise that the most vulnerable during the third wave of the pandemic may be children, so the need of the hour is to protect them as much as we can.



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## Early Puberty: Should you be concerned?

**With puberty starting earlier these days, we see a growing area of concern for many mothers.**

Many parents don't want their children to grow up too fast. We can only hope that they can remain the way they are for as long as possible. However, these days there is a growing concern regarding early or precocious puberty, particularly for young girls. This results in a plethora of medical and social hurdles, so it is essential to know how this condition will affect their health, and how we can help them through what can be a confusing time in their lives.

### SIGNS AND CAUSES OF EARLY PUBERTY

Puberty is a period of growth and development for girls as they mature into young women. This typically begins at around 10-11 years old, but some girls may start at 8 or 9. Any younger than this and your child might have early puberty.

As of today, we are not entirely sure what exactly causes early puberty. Often, it can simply be hereditary and sometimes there could be an underlying problem, such as:



Damage to the brain or a tumor



Issues related to the ovaries or thyroid gland



A genetic disorder

There are tell-tale physical signs for a young girl with this condition. These signs include:



Sudden underarm or pubic hair



Breast development



Vaginal discharge or bleeding



Having body odor



Facial or body acne

Furthermore, the end of puberty marks the end of a young girl's growth height-wise. While many girls with early puberty will experience growth spurts at first, they often do not reach their full height potential as their growth stops earlier as well.

Parents should also keep in mind that it is possible to display some of these signs and not others. For instance, some girls may have breast development or underarm hair without indicating any of the other physical changes.

### TREATMENT AND HELP AT HOME

Early puberty can be treated by addressing the underlying cause, if there is one, or using prescribed medication to regulate hormone levels and halt sexual development. Medication, on the other hand, is used only if your child is experiencing emotional or physical distress as a result of her condition.

It is best to talk to your doctor if you notice something, so that you and your child can get clarity on what is the best way forward.



### Sources:

- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Immunization, Government of India website — last updated on September 2021 <https://main.mohfw.gov.in/Organisation/Departments-of-Health-and-Family-Welfare/immunization>
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- Rachel Nania, AARP — May 18, 2021 <https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2021/chronic-conditions-after-50.html>