

## Molnupiravir reduces risk of hospitalisation by 30 per cent in both Delta & Omicron: Experts

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**Experts also threw light on how paracetamol can be used in treating omicron patients below 60 years**



The new-age antiviral treatment drugs like Molnupiravir are broad-spectrum antivirals that act as chain-terminators. This was mentioned by Dr Shashank Joshi (Padma Shri Awardee), Chair, International Diabetes Federation Southeast Asia, Endocrinologist, Joshi Clinic, Lilavati Hospital, Member, Covid 19 Maharashtra State Task Force who was speaking during Health4All Online Episode-14.

Joshi said, "We are seeing a 30 per cent hospitalisation risk reduction with the use of Molnupiravir. If someone above the age of 50 has a consistent fever for two days alongside two or three comorbidities, then the doctor might prescribe them these antivirals. Omicron patients below 60 years with no comorbidities can start symptomatic treatment with paracetamol."

Elaborating on the confusion about the use of the drug, Dr Joshi said, "There is no need to worry in such cases because these pills are not prescribed to children below the age of 18 years, or to patients who require hospitalisation or to pregnant women. The pill must be administered within 72 hours of the onset of symptoms for patients in the high-risk population group, namely, hypertensives, diabetics, people on immunosuppressed medication, senior citizens, people with other ailments and likewise."

Dr Harshal Salve, Additional Professor, Community Medicine, Co-ordinator - Collaborative on Air Pollution and Health Effects Research in India (CAPHER-India), General Secretary- Faculty Association of AIIMS (FAIMS), said, "To reduce mortality from Covid, two important things need to be taken care of. Firstly, the healthcare system needs to also focus on the management of chronic illnesses alongside Covid. The availability of medicines, medical help and other healthcare services for non-covid diseases have taken a backseat due to the pandemic. This needs to change to minimise the impact of comorbidities on the current pandemic. Secondly, all individuals in the vulnerable population must ensure that they are fully vaccinated."

Dr Nandni Sharma, Director Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Maulana Azad Medical College & Hospital, said, "We are expecting the Omicron wave will decline just as steeply as it rose upwards. As more and more people get vaccinated, the severity and duration of illness are also likely to be less than the variants seen earlier."