

Monthly Bulletin

Gov-HER-Nance

Ensuring Gender Equity and
Socio-Economic Resilience
During COVID-19



Women are generally the primary caregivers in Pakistani society. And with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, that burden of care has vastly increased. Data* shows that 83% of a woman's time is spent at home, providing care for household members, home maintenance and self-care. It is also reflected in the limited mobility of many Pakistani women. They are often four times less mobile than men leading to limited sources of information being available for them. Their need for updated information is critical to providing efficient care for their families. This bulletin aims to reach women and provide them with COVID-19 related news to help them navigate around issues of safety, community and local governance.

Accountability Lab Pakistan (ALP), with support from the Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany is publishing bulletins under the "Governance Ensuring Gender Equity and Socioeconomic Impact during COVID-19" campaign. This campaign aims to build and strengthen the resilience of marginalized populations, especially women, in three districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa against the negative impacts of COVID-19 as well as other future pandemics and health emergencies.

These bulletins include important government decisions, community feedback, verified information, valid concerns, and other questions from the ground around health, safety and local governance. These bulletins are translated into Urdu.

*Source: [UNWomen](#)

FACT



PREVENTING COVID-19 GOES HAND-IN-HAND WITH GOOD MENSTRUAL HYGIENE

Providing water, sanitation and hygiene offerings to human beings in displacement camps, informal settlements and impoverished communities ought to make contributions to the stepped forward pandemic response. These communities at the moment are dealing with shortages of cleaning soap, cleansing materials and preservation groups of workers. All of this may adversely affect both the COVID-19 response and the health and rights of women who menstruate. Menstrual fitness and Hygiene (MHH) are crucial to the well-being and empowerment of women and adolescent girls. On any given day, more than 300 million women worldwide are menstruating.

In total, an estimated 500 million women lack access to menstrual products and adequate facilities for menstrual hygiene management (MHM). To effectively manage their menstruation, women and girls require access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) centers, less expensive and appropriate menstrual hygiene materials, records on desirable practices, and a supportive environment where they can manage menstruation without embarrassment or stigma.

Source: [World Bank.org](https://www.worldbank.org/)

MYTH



MENSTRUATION IS A SIGN OF COVID-19

Having periods is healthy and normal. It is not a signal of illness. But there are numerous myths surrounding menstruation and COVID-19 circulating around the world, including menstruation as a symptom of COVID-19 and menstruating people are much more likely to infect others.

Such myths don't have any medical explanation however can increase the stigma of menstruation. So it's possible that the infection itself could stress your body or disrupt hormone levels, leading to noticeable changes in your period but it has nothing to do with covid-19.



Source: [UNICEF](https://www.unicef.org/)

EXPERIENCING GASTROINTESTINAL (GI) DISTURBANCES WHEN YOU VISIT THE TOILET COULD BE AN EARLY SIGN OF COVID-19

COVID-19 isn't always only a respiratory contamination, alternatively it could have an effect on numerous different elements of the body. From the mind to the heart to the kidneys, the SARs-CoV-2 virus can negatively affect principal human organs. But, one primary trouble that has been pronounced again and again is digestive issues associated with coronavirus.

As per a review study from September 2020, 53% of humans hospitalized with COVID-19 experienced at least one gastrointestinal (GI) symptom throughout their illness.

According to a scientific update that was published in the American Journal of Emergency medicinal drug in January 2022, "[GI] signs and symptoms are not unusual, with up to one third of patients with COVID-19 presenting first with GI signs and symptoms. Nausea and vomiting may be found in up to two-thirds of patients with COVID-19. Approximately 40% of patients with COVID-19 could have a lack of appetite, and as much as 50% can have diarrhea. Stomach pain is much less commonplace, taking place in much less than 10%." That stated, it is essential to understand the signs and symptoms before the virus takes a severe toll on our body.

The express.co.uk reports diarrhea is one of the most common and an early symptom of COVID-19, skilled by using "thousands of sufferers" at some stage in the pandemic. According to the ZOE COVID Symptom, take a look at the app (the biggest network monitoring of COVID inside the international), diarrhea is a informal symptom of COVID. "Diarrhea as a result of COVID-19 is much like the upset stomach you might get from a normal stomach bug, inclusive of rotavirus or norovirus," says the observe App. "We assume COVID-19 causes diarrhea due to the fact the virus can invade cells within the intestine and disrupt its everyday function," the fitness frame adds.

At the same time as the cause at the back of why COVID-19 reasons this symptom continues to be uncertain, specialists propose getting examined once this digestive hassle, in conjunction with different certain-shot signs, arises.



Source: [ITimes](#)

LONG COVID AND PERIODS: THE UNSPOKEN IMPACT ON FEMALE WELL-BEING

Many women with long COVID who keep experiencing Covid-19 symptoms months after the disease should have subsided have been pointing out that it has also affected their menstrual cycles.

Generally, people with long Covid often experience symptoms, such as fever, fatigue or headaches on and off for months after the initial disease should have subsided. Existing evidence indicates that Covid-19 symptoms should disappear around 2 weeks after the onset of symptoms.

The reason why so many people continue to experience disruptive symptoms remains unclear. However, researchers and medical doctors are now starting to look into possible mechanisms and the best ways to support individuals with long covid. On social media and dedicated support groups, many people with long Covid have spoken about how this prolonged state of illness has affected their menstrual cycles, further impacting their quality of life.

Irregular periods, clots, symptom flare-ups after covid

Most of the women we spoke to told us that ever since they shriveled COVID-19, they have been experiencing irregular periods, unusual clotting of their period blood, or worsened premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

However, while everybody we spoke to had experienced some modifications to their menstrual cycle, the shape of these disruptions varied. One contributor, Rose, stated getting abnormal periods seeing that she developed COVID-19 months previously. "I noticed that my menstrual cycles changed right away once I became ill with COVID-19," Rose told MNT (Medical news today). Numerous ladies are concerned about an unusual variety of clots of their menstrual discharge or approximately unusually large clots in the blood.

Source: [MNC](#)



EXPERT INTERVIEW WITH.....



In this month's expert interview section, we came into a conversation with a health expert on the impact COVID-19 made on Women's Health. On the request of the interviewee, we have kept her name and credentials anonymous.

During the past couple of years, as a result of limited mobility due to Covid-19 pandemic, it was observed that citizens, especially women's access to health providers was also minimal. What impact do you think this had on the physical health of women in general?

"As a developing country, two-thirds of the population have very minimal access to health care providers, because of the current inflation in the economy and adverse increase in the prices of medicines, and the coronavirus has also aided some of its impact on the physical health of women.

From the very beginning of the pandemic, it was clear that covid-19 did not affect everyone the same way. Gradually we have learned a lot more about covid-19 and the possible effect that it has on women's health. We learned that covid-19 affects pregnant women with stress, anxiety and depression. Early in the pandemic, pregnant women were advised to take special precautions to avoid getting infected. In fact, it is recommended that routine prenatal care visits should be canceled or done via video or telephone.

The reason for this advice was that pregnant women have a greater risk of developing severe disease when infected with other coronaviruses such as those that cause severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome (MERS).

There have been diverse reviews of humans experiencing changes to their periods while sick with COVID-19 or even after they have cleared the infection. These menstrual changes include both lighter and heavier flow, long periods, irregular periods and bigger blood clots.

Women and men generally tend to respond differently to many types of vaccines. That's probably because of a combination of factors, along with hormones, genes and the dosing of the shots.



Is there any evidence to suggest that coronavirus affects pregnant women in an adverse way? If yes, we request you to kindly elaborate on this.

Yes, it does. As we have seen some data from tertiary care hospitals that pregnant ladies were liable to getting lethal covid infection. This is just because of two things, firstly, the overall immune system becomes weak during pregnancy so the body doesn't combat it in a way to get rid of this infection. And 2ndly, in the 3rd trimester it is a stigma in our society that they should not move, or exert, due to this reason a pregnant female becomes bed-ridden and refrains highly susceptible of getting lethal covid infection.



There has been an ongoing debate on digital spaces regarding the disturbance in the menstrual cycle of women after contracting Covid-19. Is this true?

This is not because of the direct impact on menstrual physiology, it may be due to stress related just because of the hype related to covid. But yes it's true women experiencing changes to their periods while sick with COVID-19 and even after they have cleared the infection. These menstrual changes include both lighter and heavier flow, longer periods, irregular periods and bigger blood clots.

If yes, as a health expert, what would you suggest/recommend to women on how they could cope with it effectively?

Economic disruptions can lead to women and girls losing access to hygiene products. These include sanitary pads and tampons, menstrual cups, reusable napkins, pain medication and soap. I would suggest that decision-makers must ensure these items are declared essential and remain available. When menstruation-related supplies are deemed essential, it sends a clear message: essential hygiene products are a priority for the health, dignity and welfare of all women who menstruate.

How should women prepare themselves to deal with such situations in the case of future pandemics?

Not women only, infact all human beings should prepare for the worst outcomes but hope for the best. In such circumstances, a person should expect good that this pandemic will be over, try to maintain and follow strict SOPs assigned by the government, proper diet, regular exercise and keep the mental health cool and calm.





VACCINATION CENTRES

➤ MARDAN

➤ **DHQ Hospital Mardan**
03005921350

➤ **Mardan Medical Complex, Mardan**
03339298814

➤ NOWSHERA

➤ **Cat D Hospital, Manki Sharif**
03028318682

➤ **District Head Quarter Hospital Nowshera**
03005712208

➤ PESHAWAR

➤ **Hayat Abad Medical Complex Hayatabad**
03005669116

➤ **Khyber Teaching Hospital University Town**
03339677767