

- Cold (Disease) / Virus

## Can the common cold protect you from Covid?

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The Economic Times · 24 Feb 2022 · 13 · PIC: GETTY IMAGES

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Yes, it can. Many common cold viruses are coronaviruses, and people with higher levels of T cells from suffering cold coronaviruses are less likely to become infected with Covid, but it depends on the presence of T cells at the time of exposure to the virus.

Dr Rhia Kundu, first author of a study from Imperial College's National Heart and Lung Institute that examines why being exposed to Covid doesn't always result in an infection, says: "We found that high levels of pre-existing T cells, created by the body when infected with other human coronaviruses like the common cold, can protect against Covid-19 infection."

Blood samples from 52 people were taken within one to six days of exposure to the virus so researchers could analyse the levels of pre-existing T cells induced by previous common cold coronavirus infections. In the 26 people who didn't get Covid, there were significantly higher levels of these cross-reactive T cells compared to the 26 people who did become infected.

Prof Ajit Lalvani, director of the NIHR Respiratory Infections Health Protection Research Unit at Imperial College London and senior author of the study, says: "Our study provides the clearest evidence to date that T cells induced by common cold coronaviruses play a protective role. These T cells provide protection by attacking proteins within the virus, rather than the spike protein. "New vaccines that include these conserved, internal proteins would therefore induce broadly protective T cell responses that should protect variants." against current and future SARSCoV-2

While this is an important discovery, the best way to protect yourself is to be fully vaccinated