

# Survey: 72% of children not vaccinated on time

## 'Immunisation Delayed In 73% Of Kids In Delhi'

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According to the recently published National Family Health Survey (NFHS) IV, as many as 72.5% of children surveyed in the age group of 12 to 23 months, considered a crucial period in a child's development and immunity-building, were not getting immunised on time. The report indicates that the situation is the worst in Manipur, where 96.5% children in this age group were not immunised on time. This was followed by Arunachal Pradesh at 90%.

Almost all the major states in the country have fared poorly in terms of age-appropriate vaccination, the survey reported. While UP has 87.2% children in this category, Maharash-

### LOST TIME

Percentage of kids in age group of 12 to 23 months not vaccinated on time



tra has 75.2%, Delhi 72.6%, Rajasthan 79% and Karnataka 70.2%. Uttarakhand, too, has fared poorly with 79% children not getting age-appropriate immunisation.

The timing of the vaccination, say health experts, is crucial in order to ensure that the child develops immunity for a given disease at the correct age. Therefore, realising the need to monitor the administration of age-appropriate vaccina-

tion, a separate section was included in NFHS-IV for the first time.

"Non-adherence to vaccination schedule is one of the reasons for high infant mortality rate in our country. In fact, the recent NFHS data also shows that the infant mortality rate in India is currently at a high 41 deaths per 1,000 live births," said Dr DS Rawat, senior paediatrician and former director general (health) of Uttarakhand.

Elaborating on possible reasons behind these high numbers, Dr Bharti Rana, Uttarakhand state immunisation officer, told TOI that geographically-challenging terrain and acute staff crunch may be probable causes especially in many Northeastern states which have shown a dismal performance.

Interestingly, the survey indicated that while the overall percentage of immunisation in the country in the past decade had increased from 44% in 2005-06 to 62% in 2015-16, urban parts of the country showed a mere 6% increase — from 58% to 64% while rural areas recorded an impressive 22% rise in vaccination of children. The survey also revealed that there was an almost 1% increase in the number of children who received no vaccinations at all — from 5.1% in 2005-06 to 6% in 2015-16. Children in Meghalaya topped this list with 22.1% of the children surveyed in the state in the age group 12 to 23 months having never been vaccinated.