Common summer ailments and what you can do

New Delhi, 11 April, 2017: It is that time of the year again when the cool spring breeze gives way to scorching summer heat. People can be heard lamenting about how “it’s already so hot”. From students to professionals, everyone has to bear the summer heat in some way or the other. With the mercury rising steadily in the months of April and May, many summer-related ailments also begin to surface. Doctors have thus cautioned people against the common summer infections and diseases that bring people to their doorstep.

Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement said that, "One can suffer from a plethora of ailments in summer. These include Hyperthermia, heat rash, cramps, edema, and heat stroke. One can also suffer heat exhaustion which occurs when a person exposed to excessive heat or performing heavy exercise fails to replenish the body with fluids and electrolytes which it loses during the exertion. The body muscles feel fatigued and might also start aching. If left unattended, this might even lead to a fainting spell. There are many skin-related ailments like psoriasis, rashes, and blisters which get triggered due to heat exposure. Apart from these, you also need to be careful about gastrointestinal problems like inflation in the intestines, diarrhea, dysentery, and excessive vomiting. Women are prone to bacterial and viral infections in the urinary tract area."

It is extremely important to ensure that your diet has plenty of water and mineral content in it. Eating cooling and refreshing vegetables and fruits helps a lot. Avoid high-protein food, and if you are on a special diet regime which requires you to consume high-protein food, ensure that you balance it by drinking 5 to 6 cups of water.

Caffeine, tea, coffee, and alcohol tend to promote dehydration. Drinking a lot of sugary juices practically slows down the absorption process. It is also essential to avoid too much of salty food as it can alter your blood pressure when coupled with the excessive heat outside.
Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) said that, "When a person is constantly exposed to heat without any precautions, it could lead to heat strokes which can also be fatal. Every second patient a doctor sees during summer is suffering from some kind of summer ailment, allergies, or side-effects. One should constantly keep replenishing the body with fluids to compensate for the loss from sweat."

There are many precautions one can take to avoid these heat-related ailments.

- Carry a water bottle everywhere you travel.
- Avoid sugary drinks and packed juices.
- Drink water in short intervals and regularly.
- Do not wear dark and tight clothes. Light-colored and loose fitting clothes preferably in cotton are the best to tackle summer heat.
- Eat a lot of summer fruits and vegetables which are rich in water and minerals like watermelons, melons, cucumber, and zucchini to name a few.
- In case you have to travel, keep the supplies required for keeping your body cool and rested, ready with you.

Where exercise is concerned, it is ok to not push yourself too much into exertion. Lightweight and breathable clothing will help minimize heat build-up. Practice yoga, skipping, and brisk walking. Half an hour of cycling on a stationary bike is also effective good. Try to remain indoors and do not forget to stay hydrated and not to over exert your body during summer.

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About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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