Press Release

Measles needs a vaccination strategy like polio

It is a deadly disease and still a cause of major child mortality in the country

New Delhi, 15 August 2017: Statistics indicate that about 1,34,200 children, mostly under the age of five years, died due to measles around the world in the year 2015. In India, it killed 49,200 children.

As per the IMA, measles is a deadly disease and one of the main causes behind child mortality in the country. Eliminating measles will help achieve Sustainable Development Goal’s target 3.2, which aims to end preventable deaths of children under 5 years by 2030.

Measles is a highly infectious illness caused by the rubeola virus. As many as 21 strains of the virus have been identified to date. The virus takes about 1 to 3 weeks to establish itself. While there is no specific treatment for this, getting vaccination at the right time can be affective. Pregnant women are advised taking the vaccine.

Speaking about this, 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, “The rubeolavirus lives in the mucus of the nose and throat of an infected child or adult. The disease is contagious for 4 days before the rash appears. It then continues to be contagious for about 4 to 5 days after. A person can get infected through physical contact with an infected person, being near an infected people when they cough or sneeze, touching a surface that has infected droplets of mucus. When the virus enters the body, it multiplies in the back of the throat, lungs, and the lymphatic system. The infection then replicates in the urinary tract, eyes, blood vessels, and central nervous system.”

The symptoms of measles include runny nose, dry hacking cough, swollen eyelids, and inflamed and watery eyes, sensitivity to light, sneezing, a reddish-brown rash, Koplik’s spots, and generalized body aches.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “A highly contagious disease, measles spreads like wildfire in communities where children are unvaccinated. Since the virus reduces immunity, children who have had measles - especially those who are undernourished - may die of pneumonia, diarrhea and encephalitis later on. India should build on its polio eradication campaign experience to ensure more children get vaccinated against measles. Awareness needs to be created about the need and safety of measles vaccination.”
Some tips to ease the symptoms of measles include the following.

- Get adequate rest and avoid heavy activities.
- Drink plenty of water, fruit juice, and herbal tea to replace fluids lost by fever and sweating.
- Seek respiratory relief and use a humidifier to relieve cough and sore throat.
- Rest your eyes by keeping the lights low, and avoid reading and watching the television.

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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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