Smoking increases the chances of acquiring an erectile dysfunction
*Lifestyle changes and quitting smoking can go a long way in reducing the risks*

**New Delhi, 17 August 2017:** Studies indicate that men who smoke more than 20 cigarettes a day have 60% higher risk of erectile dysfunction (ED). About 15% of past and present smokers experience an ED. Other important factors that contribute to this condition include diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, all of which can also get further exacerbated by smoking. As per the IMA, smoking also leads to reduced volume of ejaculation, low sperm count, sperm shape, etc.

ED is defined as a persistent difficulty achieving and maintaining an erection. The causes for this disorder can be both medical and psychological. Frequent ED is usually the sign of health problems which may require treatment.

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, “Sexual arousal in males is a complex process involving the brain, hormones, emotions, nerves, muscles, and blood vessels. ED can occur when there is a problem with any of these associated factors. Stress and mental health concerns have been known to worsen the condition. Sometimes, ED is the result of a combination of physical and psychological issues such as a minor physical condition that slows a person’s sexual response leading to anxiety. This anxiety can lead to or worsen ED.”

There are various risk factors which can contribute to ED. These include medical conditions, being overweight, certain medical treatments such as prostate surgery or radiation treatment for cancer, injuries, medications such as antidepressants, psychological conditions, and drinking.

Adding further, **Dr Aggarwal,** said, “Many men with ED have been able to improve their sexual function through lifestyle changes. It is imperative to give up smoking, lose weight, and exercise which will all help in improving blood flow. In case a medication seems to be the contributing factor, it is a good idea to speak to a doctor about adjusting the dosage or switching to another drug.”

The following steps can reduce a person’s risk of acquiring ED.
• **Start walking:** At least 30 minutes of walking a day is linked with a 41% drop in risk for ED.

• **Eat right:** Eating a diet rich in fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and fish can decrease the likelihood of ED.

• **Pay attention to vascular health:** High blood pressure, high blood sugar, high cholesterol, and high triglycerides can all damage arteries in the male organ. Low levels of HDL (good) cholesterol and an expanding waistline also contribute.

• **Get slim and stay slim:** Obesity raises risks for vascular disease and diabetes, two major causes of ED. Excess fat interferes with several hormones that may be part of the problem as well.

• **Build pelvic muscles and not biceps:** A strong pelvic floor enhances rigidity during erections and helps keep blood from leaving the penis by pressing on a key vein.

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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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