Lifestyle changes and stress can cause premature ovarian failure in women

Although the condition cannot be reversed, certain treatments and lifestyle changes can control associated symptoms and risks

New Delhi, 20 August 2017: A recent survey has indicated that about 4% of Indian women experience signs of menopause between 29 and 34 years of age. This is alarming given the fact that most women reach menopause between the age of 45 and 55. As per the IMA, the reason behind this is likely to be Premature Ovarian Failure (POF), some contributing factors for which include changing food habits and work culture with increased stress.

POF is a loss of normal function of the ovaries before the age of 40. Women with this condition can have irregular or occasional periods for years and might even become pregnant. However, it is not the same as premature menopause.

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, “POF results from the loss of eggs (oocytes). The atmosphere today, lifestyle habits, food adulteration as well as consumption of processed food can lead to many changes in a woman’s body. These factors are responsible for the rise in the number of cases of POF in young adults. It is a good idea for women who have missed their period for three months or more to consult a doctor and determine the exact cause. Changes in period cycle may be due to pregnancy, stress, or a change in diet or exercise habits. However, it is best to get evaluated on time.”

The symptoms of POF resemble those of a natural menopause and include change in the pattern of periods, hot flashes, mood swings, crying spells, and sleeplessness. A woman can have POF if her FSH level (follicle stimulating hormone) after a blood test is more than 25mIU/L.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “Although there is no proven treatment for POF, there are other alternatives such as adopting a healthier lifestyle which can help to a certain extent. Certain treatment procedures focus on the problems that arise from estrogen deficiency. Apart from this, assisted reproductive techniques have shown a ray of hope for those with issues such as these.”

Some natural treatment methods can be tried to relieve hot flashes. Here are some tips.
• Eat soy as it contains phytoestrogens. Some of the best sources of soy are tofu, soy powder, soymilk, and soy nuts.
• Exercise, as an active lifestyle can lower the risk of premature menopause. About 30 minutes of aerobic exercise thrice a week is ideal.
• Make sure that you get an ample supply of Vitamin D, E, zinc, and magnesium.
• Eat foods that are rich in calcium such as cheese, almonds, green leafy vegetables, milk, fortified cereals like corn flakes, and raisin bran.

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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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