Indian diet is protein deficient

Indians not aware of the importance of consuming adequate protein

New Delhi, 04 August, 2017: According to a recently conducted study, about 73% of the Indian diet is protein deficient with the deficiency more alarming in a vegetarian diet. About 84% of the vegetarian diet is low on protein compared to 64% in the case of a non-vegetarian diet. Protein is one of the most misunderstood and underestimated nutrients in the Indian scenario, says IMA. Additionally, about 93% Indians have no knowledge of an ideal protein intake.

Protein is one of the fundamental nutrients required by the human body. The recommended dietary allowance for protein is 1 gram per kg of body weight and our body needs this nutrient to meet the requirement of amino acid. However, the requirement varies with the activity level and also during pregnancy.

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, “One of the reasons why the Indian diet is protein deficient is that 60% of it is composed of cereals. Cereals are good sources of protein as well, however, they are short of an essential amino acid. Methionine, which is needed for growth and tissue repair is missing in pulses and dals, otherwise rich in protein. Thus, it is important to consume a combination of cereals and pulses in an ideal ratio of 5:1. However, even with this combination, there can be problems with digesting the protein. To counter this, it is a good idea to consume combination of cereals, pulses, and animal protein such as milk, meat, eggs, etc.”

On the other hand, too much of protein, such as that consumed by fitness freaks, is also harmful to the body. This can put a lot of pressure on the liver and kidneys to get it out of the system.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “For many Indians, a bowl of dal suffices as a protein source, along with rice. However, it is important to take a note of the proportion in which this is eaten. Additionally, a bowl of dal is not enough protein for the body. The best combinations in the typical Indian diet include rice with dal, rajma, kadhi, mushrooms, curd, and soya.”

The following foods can help prevent a possible protein deficiency, especially in those with a busy schedule.
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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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