Summer-related ailments resurface

90% of the cases reported are due to overexposure to heat and prevention is key, says IMA

New Delhi, 11 June, 2017: It is that time of the year again when everyone laments about the hot and sultry weather conditions. Be it students or professionals, everyone is exposed to the summer heat in some way or the other. With the weather becoming unpredictable by the day, many summer-related ailments are beginning to resurface. The IMA has cautioned people against common heat-related disorders and urged them to take preventive measures.

The country faced a terrible heat wave in 2015 which took over 2000 lives and 2016 was also the hottest year since 1901. Heat stress is a condition in which the human body experiences more heat than it can tolerate.

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, "Many different kinds of ailments can strike in the summer. Some of these include Hyperthermia, heat rash, cramps, edema, and heat stroke. Heat exhaustion is another condition where a person exposed to excessive heat or performing heavy exercise fails to replenish the body with fluids and electrolytes lost during the exertion. The body muscles become fatigued and can start aching as well. If left unattended, these can lead to a fainting spell. Many skin-related ailments like psoriasis, rashes, and blisters also get triggered due to excessive heat. There is a need to be careful about gastrointestinal problems like inflation in the intestines, diarrhea, dysentery, and excessive vomiting too. Women are prone to bacterial and viral infections in the urinary tract area."

Ensuring that one's daily diet has plenty of water and mineral content in it can help keep these heat disorders at bay. Consume cooling and refreshing vegetables and fruits. It is a good idea to avoid high-protein food, and those on a special diet regime which requires consumption of high-protein food, should balance it by drinking 5 to 6 cups of water. Caffeine, tea, coffee, and alcohol tend to promote dehydration and are best kept to the minimum.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, "Constant exposure to heat without any precautions can lead to heat strokes which can be fatal. Every second patient visiting a doctor during summer suffers from
some kind of summer ailment, allergies, or their side-effects. It is imperative to constantly keep replenishing the body with fluids to compensate for the loss from sweat."

Here are some precautions one can take during summers to avoid heat-related disorders.

- Carry a water bottle everywhere.
- 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.
- Exercise in moderation. Lightweight and breathable clothing can help minimize heat build-up. Practice yoga, skipping, and brisk walking. Try remaining indoors, stay hydrated, and do not over exert your body in these months.

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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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