Indians consume less of fruits and vegetables

Eating patterns are a primary reason for increase in non-communicable diseases

New Delhi, 20 November 2017: As per a recent nation-wide study that assessed urban nutrition, it has been found that Indians consume far less than the recommended amounts of several micro-nutrients and vital vitamins, despite the food diversity that exists in the country. Statistics indicate that the recommended dietary intake of green-leafy vegetables is 40g/CU/day. However, it is only 24g/CU/day in the country. The average intake of cereals and millets was found to be 320g/CU/day. The intake of pulses and legumes was about 42g/CU/day.

The beneficial effects of fruits and vegetables on health are well-recognized. And, several studies have established the advantages of eating a fruit and vegetable-rich diet.

People who eat more fruits and vegetables are 42% less likely to be at risk of heart failure than those who consumed fewer plant-based foods.[2] Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, cutting down on salt, and maintaining a healthy weight are all important parts of a balanced diet that can help lower the risk of heart disease and stroke as also other non-communicable diseases such as type 2 diabetes.

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 burden of non-communicable diseases in on the rise today. One of the major factors that can be attributed to this is an unhealthy diet that is also lacking in fruits and vegetables. India is undergoing an ‘epidemiological transition’ from communicable to non-communicable or so-called lifestyle disease. An unhealthy diet is also the basis for metabolic risk factors such as obesity, and raised blood pressure, blood glucose and blood cholesterol levels. A well balanced diet includes all seven colors and six tastes. As per research, affluent Indians are getting 30% of their daily energy intake from fat and are consuming half the amount of dietary fibre than previous generations. Indians are largely ignoring certain warning signs and this poor choice is showing up in mortality data.”
Heart disease has become the top killer in India, followed by diabetes and cancer. While there is a need for concerted action on public health awareness by the government, what is also needed is an effort at an individual level.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “We have slowly but steadily turned to lives dictated by technology, busy work schedules, long working hours, ignorance, and a sedentary lifestyle, not to mention a diet rich in fast and processed food. So-called health conscious individuals consume ready-to-eat breakfast options and a majority skip this most important meal of the day altogether! At least five servings of fruits and vegetables should be taken daily.”

Given below are some WHO guidelines on the intake of fruits and vegetables.

- One adult portion of fruit or vegetables is 80 g. As a rough guide, one child portion is the amount they can fit in the palm of the hand.
- To get the most benefit, the five portions should include a variety of fruit and vegetables.
- Potatoes and other tubers cannot count towards the five-a-day because they contribute mainly starch.
- Beans and pulses can supply a maximum of one portion a day, irrespective of how much you eat. Three heaped tablespoons of chickpeas (chana) or kidney beans (rajma) make a portion.
- Dried fruit like figs and prunes can contribute to the five-a-day. A portion of dried fruit is 30 g.
- Fruit/vegetable juices and smoothies are best limited to a combined total of 150 ml a day.

-Ends-

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.

For further information please contact:
Sanjeev Khanna - 9871079105
Md Adib Ahmad – 9873716235
mediaimahq@gmail.com
IMA Public & Media Advocacy Cell