Better be safe than sorry during the festival of lights
Those with cardiac and respiratory ailments should be particularly careful
Eating and drinking should be healthy and in moderation, with adequate physical activity

New Delhi, 18 October 2017: Diwali, the festival of lights and harbinger of prosperity and cheer, is characterized not just by this. It is also that time of the year when health risks escalate. From the ghee-laden sweets to the pollution-inducing crackers, there is a lot to think about in terms of one’s health. According to statistics, the annual carbon dioxide emissions from fireworks is 60,000 tonnes. The IMA says that this is not only to the environment but also to the health. Add to this the sweets and savories and alcohol binge, and one’s weight is sure to catapult.

Diwali is that time of the year when people lose track of their eating, drinking, and fitness habits. Apart from this, noxious gases such as carbon monoxide from crackers can be detrimental for those with asthma or heart ailments.

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, "There is a sudden change in both eating and sleeping patterns during Diwali. Late night parties binge-eating, alcohol, and lack of exercise affect health in many ways. People also do not drink enough water to keep themselves hydrated. White sugar in sweets can lead to uncontrolled diabetes and gain weight in individuals. Adulterated khoya can cause GI upset. Artificial coloring in sweets can cause cancer in long run. Those with COPD (adult asthma) need to be careful as the smoke from crackers can worsen respiratory illnesses. Excessive noise pollution during Diwali can cause hearing loss, high blood pressure, and mental irritation. It can also exacerbate heart ailments in people sometimes leading to a cardiac arrest as well. One should also be careful of candle pollution as petroleum is a known human carcinogen and can cause indoor pollution.”

Diwali fire hazards are also not uncommon and can result in burns and loss of life. Particles of crackers can cause eye burn and irritation. People also indulge in excessive consumption of alcohol which is injurious to health.
Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “The best item for Diwali is fruits and dry fruits. Avoid ‘chhena’ and ‘khoya’ sweets, along with sweets and milk products from roadside shops. One should not drive after consuming more than 30 ml in one hour. While gambling one should not argue with others as someone under the influence of alcohol may cause harm. Those with COPD should use wet clothes whenever they are exposed to smoke. It is imperative to remember that health is above all and no festival or occasion should be an excuse to compromise on health.”

Here are certain things one can observe to stay away from harm and ensure good health during Diwali.

- Limit the use of firecrackers and avoid loud explosives. Those with asthma should wear face masks to prevent inhaling the poisonous mix of gases. Those with cardiac problems and hypertension should wear ear plugs to prevent the impact of the cracker explosions.
- Check the manufacturing and expiry dates of sweets and snacks before buying them. Avoid buying anything from roadside shops.
- Replace oily snacks with a combination of fresh fruits, curd dips, raw salads, roasted food items and nuts like almonds and pistachios. Replace carbohydrates and proteins with fibre and vitamins in your diet. Ensure that you stay hydrated by drinking lots of water through the day.
- In case of burns, the affected part should be put in running water till the burning sensation disappears. Blisters should not be punctured, as they work like a natural dressing.

-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