**Press Release**

**Time and plan your meals for better heart health**

*AHA study suggests that meal planning and timing are just as crucial as the components of diet.*

**New Delhi, Feb 6, 2017**: A new scientific statement from the American Heart Association (AHA) has highlighted the role of meal timing and frequency in prevention of cardiovascular diseases. According to it, planning when to eat meals and snacks and not skipping breakfast are patterns associated with healthier diets, which could reduce risk of cardiovascular disease.

Specific eating patterns like skipping breakfast; intermittent fasting, meal frequency and timing of eating occasions are closely associated with poor outcomes for heart health.

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, “As clinicians, our main emphasis is on eating a healthy diet, one that is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, poultry and fish and limiting red meat, salt and foods high in added sugars. In light of this new evidence, we should also educate our patients that “when and how often a person eats” are also important in promoting heart health. This will help inculcate a more intentional approach towards eating. Irregular patterns of eating have adverse impact on cardiac and metabolic health such as obesity, high blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose levels.”

The body and all our internal organs have clocks. There is an optimal time when the organs are more efficient at receiving nutrients from food. Moreover, food-processing enzymes also work optimally during the day than night, which is mainly a rest point for metabolism.

“Meal timing has profound effects on health due to its impact on the body’s internal clock, the more in-sync with the clock our meals are, the more healthier they are. Inability to maintain this synchronization can cause altered nutrient metabolism, resulting in greater weight gain, insulin resistance and inflammation. Skipping breakfast is one major unhealthy habit associated with poorer heart health across various studies. A greater frequency of eating such as taking smaller but frequent meals throughout the span of the day is also associated with lower cholesterol levels. In addition, eating during late night hours is associated with a higher risk for heart disease”, added Dr. Aggarwal.
Being mindful of your eating habits and making a proper meal plan well in advance can help combat obesity and other risk factors associated with heart health and cardiovascular diseases. Such mindful practices also allow informed nutritional decisions, which, ultimately promotes overall health.

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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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