IMA Lead-free Healthy Society Initiative

In growing children lead exposure can cause decline in IQ, hyperactivity, attention deficit, learning disorders and anemia.

New Delhi, Jan 24, 2017: About 50% of the worldwide burden of lead poisoning occurs in Southeast Asia. In 2004, 16% of all children in the world were estimated to have blood lead levels more than 10 mcg/dL (0.48 micromol/L) with 90% of the children with elevated levels living in low-income regions.

No level of lead exposure is safe for children. The US CDC is considering lowering its threshold for raised childhood (0-6 years) blood lead levels by 30%, from the current value of 5 to 3.5 micrograms per deciliter.

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, “Lead poisoning is especially hard to detect even in those who have accumulated potentially toxic amounts. At considerably high levels of exposure, lead can damage the brain and central nervous system and can lead to coma. In extreme cases, convulsions and even death can occur. Symptoms of lead poisoning usually don't appear until highly dangerous amounts have build up in the body. Some major sources of blood borne lead include lead contaminated soil, drinking water, petrol emissions, household dust, battery recycling, silver refining, paints, printing presses, ceramic pottery glazes, cosmetics, colours and crayons.”

Exposure to lead, typically in peeling old paint, tainted water or contaminated soil, can cause cognitive impairment and other irreversible health impacts. Currently specific interventions for lead poisoning start at blood levels more than ≥5 mcg/dL.

“When pregnant women are exposed to lead in the environment, it can have detrimental effects on the mother as well as the developing baby. Exposure of pregnant women to high levels of lead can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth and low birth weight, as well as malformations. Genetic disorders are also a common manifestation of lead exposure during pregnancy. Women with high blood lead levels can develop early osteoporosis, lower backache, joint pain and anemia which can persist for considerably long durations”, added Dr. Aggarwal.
Adults are also at an increased risk of kidney disease and raised blood pressure following lead exposure.

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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 29 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 53,000 doctors as its members through more than 1650 active local branches spread across the country.

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