Your BMI is valuable to calculate your risk of heart attack

*High body mass index is a major risk factor for a variety of cardiovascular ailments. Keeping obesity in check through regular BMI monitoring can significantly reduce a risk of major coronary episodes, including heart attack.*

New Delhi, March 14, 2016: Certain risk factors contribute to the risk of a heart attack in an individual. Some of these risk factors are beyond our control and hence unmodifiable. However, the environmental component of predisposition to heart attack can be modified. One such factor is body mass index and it has a huge contribution to the development of a future heart attack.

The body mass index (BMI) is the most practical way to evaluate the degree of obesity. It is calculated from the height and weight as follows:

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\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{body weight (in kg)}}{\text{square of stature (height, in meters)}}
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Overweight is defined as a BMI between 23 and 30 kg/m² and obesity as a BMI greater than 30 kg/m².

Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) in a joint statement said, “Diet has a huge impact on the development of a cardiovascular disorder. Being overweight makes you more likely to develop hypertension, diabetes and atherosclerosis. These conditions can put you at high risk of cardiovascular disease, including a heart attack. It is important to be aware of one’s BMI value to understand your risk of future heart attack. To determine if your weight is linked to an increased risk of heart disease, two measurements are employed- Body Mass Index and waist circumference. Together these values can help you assess if you belong to a high risk category. This will allow the start of preventive measures and lifestyle changes as early as possible.”

“If you are less than 40 years of age, male, with a strong family history of diabetes, blood pressure or heart disease, have a normal weight as judged by body mass index (BMI) but have a pot belly, or have gained more than 10 kg since the age 18, do not ignore this and go to your cardiologist to reduce your chances of a future heart attack.”, adds Dr K K Aggarwal.
Following are some guidelines dictating how BMI and heart attack correlate:

1. Subjects with a BMI of 23 to 30 kg/m² may be described as having low risk, while those with a BMI of 30 to 35 kg/m² are at moderate risk.
2. Subjects with a BMI of 35 to 40 kg/m² are at high risk, and those with a BMI above 40 kg/m² are at very high risk from their obesity.
3. At any given level of BMI, the risk to health is increased by more abdominal fat (increased weight to hip ratio, WHR), hyperlipidemia, hypertension, age less than 40 years, male sex, and a strong family history of diabetes, hypertension, or heart disease.

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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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