Prevent arthritis from slowing you down

*Arthritis is a chronic life-long condition and warrants constant care and management.*

**New Delhi, Dec 5, 2016:** Arthritis affects over 180 million people in India, which is roughly 15%. It is a major cause of disability and poor quality of life. Lifestyle and preventive health measures can help you find your pace while living with arthritis.

Arthritis is a major cause of disability worldwide. If left untreated and unmanaged, it can lead to chronic pain, stiffness, swelling, leg deformities and significantly reduced range of mobility.

**Padma Shri Awardee Dr. K.K Aggarwal, President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and National President Elect Indian Medical Association (IMA),** stated that, “Living a healthy lifestyle with certain basic preventive measures can help you prevent arthritis with advancing age. These measures can also help reduce the degree or severity of an existing condition. Patients should keep moving and avoid holding one position for long. While working, it is good to get up and stretch every 15 minutes. Only a very small percentage of people with arthritis become severely disabled and get dependent on others, educate family members and friends about how arthritis affects you. Don’t be afraid to ask for help when you need it.”

Maintaining a healthy body weight can have a significant impact on arthritis. Being overweight or obese increases the pressure the joints. Such pressure may also contribute to generalized inflammation that can increase arthritis symptoms and lead to flare ups. Losing weight in a healthy way is advised to curb these symptoms.

Getting adequate sleep, exercising regularly, and eating a low-fat, high-fiber diet are all protective against arthritis.

“It is important that patients plan ahead. Simplify and organize your routines so you minimize movements that are difficult or painful. Keep items you need for cooking, cleaning, or hobbies near where they are needed. Have multiple sets of cleaning supplies, one for the kitchen and one for the bathroom. You can also make use of laborsaving devices and adaptive aids. Long-handled grippers can be designed to grasp and retrieve out-of-reach objects. Rubber grips can help one get a better handle on faucets, pens, toothbrushes, and silverware”, added Dr. K.K Aggarwal.

The best you can do is discover your strength and plan accordingly. For example, put the strongest joints and muscles to work. Push open heavy doors with the side of the arm or shoulder. It will protect finger and wrist joints. While climbing up let the strong leg lead you and while going down let the weaker leg lead you. It will reduce hip or knee stress.