Staying healthy with the changing weather

As we transition from fall to winter, it is imperative to take extra care of our health in this vulnerable season

New Delhi, Nov 11, 2016: The transition from the blazing heat of summer months to Delhi's famous crackling winter is not a smooth one and winter's colder temperatures can present multifold risks. Cold weather can put stress on the heart and the overall health in a number of ways, and especially people with pre-existing heart conditions and the elderly are more vulnerable to winter's health challenges. As the mercury drops down further, we can expect a number of health changes in a variety of ways. Dry air can cause skin problems, frigid temperatures can worsen respiratory disorders and a lack of optimal sunshine can lead to depression (commonly known as the Seasonal Affective Disorder or, the SAD syndrome).

The heart and circulatory system is the most affected during such weather changes, as cold can put an immense pressure on the heart muscles and the lungs. It is seen that there is a significant spike in the number of heart attacks, asthmatic attacks and stroke during this season. Thus, in these changing weather conditions, taking extra care of your health should be a prime concern especially, in those with pre-existing conditions and the elderly. Apart from that; allergic disorders, eye and skin problems also warrant extra concern.

Padma Shri Awardee Dr. KK Aggarwal - President HCFI and National President Elect IMA, added that “Low temperatures, especially sudden drop in temperature during the changing weather can cause blood vessels and arteries to constrict and narrow down, restricting blood flow and reducing the amount of oxygen reaching the heart. To compensate for this, the heart must pump harder in order to circulate blood through the constricted blood vessels. It results in a rapid elevation in blood pressure and heart rate. A sudden spike in blood pressure – especially when paired with outdoor activity that requires even moderate exertion, can cause serious issues such as unstable angina, stroke and heart attack. Moreover, the propensity for a stroke attack also increases in winter months due to thickening of blood by excess fibrinogen and bad cholesterol levels.”

“Another major concern is the increasing number of cough and cold cases during the changing weather. Viral attacks especially have a tendency to peak during this time of the season. Prolonged cough and cold coupled with pre-existing conditions like Tuberculosis, asthma can be extremely harmful. Joint pains and the frequency of migraine attacks also increase significantly during this time of the year. Allergies also increase during the changing weather and dry air can help in increasing the severity of the symptoms of allergic disorders like allergic rhinitis”, Dr. K.K Aggarwal further added.

Following are some tips for staying healthy in this changing weather:
• Stay extra cautious, the days may feel hot but the evenings can get increasingly chilly. Carry a sweater or a jacket with yourself.
• Ease up on the air conditioning, use fans instead and take a thin bed sheet or a blanket while sleeping.
• Eating well, getting enough sleep and staying active become more important during this transitory season to help support your immune system.
• Spend some time exercising and continue the habit into the cold winter seasons as well. Make sure you do proper warm up exercises beforehand. It will also improve circulation.
• Proper sleep can help keep the body's immune system healthy and fight off colds.
• Avoid excessive alcohol and caffeine consumption.
• The cold weather can cause dry, itchy skin, chill blains and eczema. Use skin moisturizers daily.
• As the weather cools down and our thirst decreases it is easy to forget to drink enough water, remind yourself to stay hydrated regularly.

About Heart Care Foundation of India
Initiated in 1986, the Heart Care Foundation of India is a leading National NGO working in the field of creating mass health awareness among people from all walks of life and providing solutions for India's everyday healthcare needs. The NGO uses consumer-based entertainment modules to impart health education and increase awareness amongst people. A leading example of this is the Perfect Health Mela; an annual event started in 1993 that is attended by over 2-3 lakh people each year. The Mela showcases activities across categories such as health education seminars and check-ups, entertainment programs, lifestyle exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and competitions. In addition to this, the NGO conducts programs and camps to train people on the technique of hands only CPR through its CPR 10 mantra for revival after a sudden cardiac arrest. They currently hold three Limca book of world records for the maximum number of people trained in hands-only CPR in one go. Keeping article 21 of the Indian Constitution in mind, which guarantees a person Right to Life, Heart Care Foundation of India has also recently initiated a project called the Sameer Malik Heart Care Foundation Fund to ensure that no one dies of a heart disease just because they cannot afford treatment.

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