Asthma and winter care: What can you do to protect yourself?

In case of patients who are suffering from asthma, the lungs become irritable and more reactive than before during winter months.

New Delhi, 17th November 2016: While the sudden change in weather comes as a sign of relief for many, it also brings with it health implications especially for those suffering from pre-existing lifestyle diseases like asthma. It is essential that special care be taken during this time to be able to properly enjoy the winter season.

According to the World Health Organization, India is home to an estimated 20 million asthma patients. All of them suffer from moderate to severe cases of asthma and hence, it really becomes important for these patients to understand how a common virus can trigger a major asthma attack in the winter months.

Stressing on the topic, Padma Shri Awardee Dr. KK Aggarwal - President HCFI and National President Elect IMA said, “To eradicate the dangers, one must understand what triggers asthma. We recommend that people must stay away from smoke filled rooms, highly polluted areas and spend more time in parks and amongst nature. Given that mites also trigger asthma, patients should use mite-proof covers on the mattresses and pillows. Special attention should also be paid to keeping ones house dry and cool so as to prevent mites and molds’ from growing. In addition to this, consuming a healthy diet and getting adequate exercise and Vitamin D through sunlight is key to mainlining necessary immunity levels”.

What can you do?

- **Wash your hands regularly:** The importance of maintaining hand hygiene has been stressed too often because it is one of the best and simplest ways to avoid catching and spreading common cold and flu viruses. Medical experts advise that an individual uses alcohol-based moist hand sanitizers; this trick will definitely shield you against the danger of catching germs as well.

- **Avoid sitting by the fireplace:** Lighting up a bonfire in chilly winters might sound as a great idea for a cozy day, but sitting really close to a fireplace or just near the heater might not be good for asthmatic patients. Smoke coming from the burning wood can harm your lungs and give you breathing issues aggravating an asthma attack.

- **Get a flu shot:** Although having asthma won’t make you susceptible to flu viruses, but these viruses can make asthma severe or more worse in some patients. Getting a vaccine will keep your symptoms under control by protecting you from the harmful attacks of the virus.

- **Clean the heater and replace the filters:** A season off can cause a lot of germs to deposit inside the packed heaters and their filters. And once you start them without cleaning them, it can cause dust to blow through your nose and as well your house causing an asthma attack.
patient to develop an allergy. And hence, it is always advised that heaters should be cleaned and filters should be replaced before prepping up for a new season.

- Exercise indoor and warm up before starting up: Chilly waves can impact your lungs and might make it problematic to breathe and that’s why medical experts advise that patients should instead opt for a gym or exercise outdoors when the weather is a little warm. Innumerable studies have shown that the lungs of asthmatic patients work more efficiently when they warm up before starting up their exercise routine.

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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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