Is alcohol consumption actually beneficial for your health?

New Delhi, October 15, 2016: Numerous discussions regarding the consumption of alcohol in restricted or altered amounts for a healthy and sound heart often do the rounds. These certainties additionally guarantee that reasonable intake of liquor can lead to curtailed aging and lower the chances of heart attacks and paralysis. Speaking about the issue, Padma Shri Awardee Dr KK Aggarwal, President HCFI & President Elect IMA said, “Most of these claims remain unproved and in my opinion are just myths. I strongly believe that half the data is equivalent to no data and no lab or scientific agency has till date managed to prove the cardiovascular benefits of alcohol consumption for Indians”.

“Most of the scientific claims about the benefits of alcohol consumption are restricted to patients from developed countries like the US, Great Britain and France amongst others. What one must understand is that the body composition of people from different nations varies drastically. For instance in India the incidence of fatty liver disease is extremely high affecting over 35%. In a case such as this, the consumption of alcohol in any measure is not only unsafe but can also prove to be fatal”, he added.

Most people remain unaware of the face that the definition of a standard measure of alcohol differs from country to country. While in the US 45 ml of a drink is accepted as a standard measure, in Great Britain it is 24ml, Japan 80 ml and in India 30ml. So if today a person reads an international study about the benefits of drinking two measures of whiskey for a healthy heart, he in most cases will either under or over-consume alcohol on a regular basis which may cause more harm than good. Please note that here we are taking a measures of neat spirits such as Whiskey, Vodka, Rum and Gin into consideration and not beer and wine which are calculated on the basis of a per glass or bottle/can intake.

Another factor which people often oblivious to is that most studies prove the consumption of limited quantities of alcohol beneficial for diseases like coronary heart blockages, ischemic paralysis and diabetes which affect only patients above the age of 45. So consumption of alcohol by people under the age of 45 is not only harmful for the heart but also poses a risk of alcohol dependency in the future.

Detailing the guidelines one must keep in mind while consuming alcohol and what is actually considered a safe limit of alcohol consumption, Dr KK Aggarwal said:

Firstly alcohol consumption during pregnancy, by people who have a strong family history of alcoholism, previous brain hemorrhage, liver or pancreatic disease can be extremely dangerous and should in all possibilities be avoided.
Secondly the use of alcohol should be restricted and closely monitored in patients with active gastritis, esophagitis, premalignant GI lesions such as Barrett’s esophagus, or a strong family history of breast cancer as over-consumption can cause complications in the future.

For people without any of these conditions, the social limit of alcohol can be defined basis the following:

1. Men can tolerate more alcohol than women

2. The ideal dose of alcohol is 5-7 grams per day (One drink every other day). In women, the dose is 4 g/day. (One drink every third day)

3. 10 to 15 grams of ethanol is found in one glass of wine, one can or bottle of beer, or one mixed drink

4. People who are socially active and consume alcohol on a regular basis must keep in mind that drinking and driving is extremely dangerous and for every 30ml of alcohol they consume, they must avoid going behind the wheel for one hour. So if a person consumes 3 small drinks in a night he must not drive for a minimum of 3 hours after

5. Young to middle aged women must regulate their alcohol consumption as moderate drinking (90 ml of alcohol everyday) can drastically increase the chances of sudden death due to trauma or the incidence of breast cancer

6. According to Ayurveda, one should not consume any fermented items post sunset. So drinking alcohol during the day is safer for the heart than consuming it in the night

Thus, it is recommend that people abstain from drinking alcohol. And if they must drink socially, it is extremely important that they stick to the safe limits of drinking and ensure that they eat a healthy and balanced diet and get adequate exercise to avoid becoming victims of leading lifestyle diseases and cardiovascular ailments. For those who often quote different studies when told to restrict their alcohol consumption stating that its actually beneficial for their health, must consult their doctor and understand how applicable it is to them. And lastly with the growing pub culture in the country, young people and their parents must ensure that they keep a check on their alcohol intake as it may lead to a dependency in the future.

More information and special insights about this issue will be discussed in the upcoming **MTNL Perfect Health Mela** from 25-29th October, 2016 at Talkatora indoor stadium, New Delhi.

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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.

For more information, please contact

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