



INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Department of Health Research – Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India

Media report (8 to 14 June 2019)
(Health News)

(Syed Adil Shamim Andrabi)
Information Interface Officer

Poor sleep linked to mental health issues in students

June 08, 2019/ The Tribune

Easy ways to help manage your asthma during summers

June 08, 2019/ The Indian Express

High-res snapshot of chikungunya virus may lead to drugs, vaccines

June 09, 2019/ The Indian Express

Junk food consumption ups allergy risk in kids

June 09, 2019/ The Tribune

Why smokers are thrice more prone to chronic back pain

June 09, 2019/ The Indian Express

Nicotine in e-cigarettes raises chronic bronchitis risk: Study

June 10, 2019/ Times of India

Diabetic Foot Ulcers Can Be Deadly — This New Treatment May Be the Answer

June 10, 2019/ Health Line

Millions of heart disease, stroke deaths linked to not eating enough fruits, vegetables: Study

June 10, 2019/ The Indian Express

Compounds from scorpion venom may help treat bacterial infections

June 11, 2019/ The Tribune

Vitamin D Supplements May Help People with Cancer Live Longer

June 11, 2019/ The Healthline

Why You Probably Shouldn't Give Antacids to Infants

June 12, 2019/ Healthline



Life expectancy in India down by 2.6 yrs due to air pollution: Study

June 12, 2019/ The Tribune

Being overweight doubles blood pressure risk in kids

June 13, 2019/ The Tribune

India can lead the way in nutritious, sustainable diet, say experts

June 13, 2019/ Hindustan Times

Toxic substance in lychee killing children in Bihar: Reports

June 14, 2019/ Times of India

World Blood Donor Day 2019: Important things to know before you donate blood

June 14, 2019/ The Indian Express

Poor sleep linked to mental health issues in students

June 08, 2019/ The Tribune

Insufficient sleep is associated with a wide range of mental health issues such as anxiety, self-harm and suicide ideation among students and athletes, according to a study. Published in the journal *Sleep*, the study analysis involved 110,496 students, out of which 8,462 were athletes. "It was really surprising to see how strongly insufficient sleep was associated with a wide variety of mental health symptoms among college students," said lead author Thea Ramsey from the University of Arizona in the US. With every additional night of insufficient sleep, the risk of experiencing mental health symptoms increased on average by more than 20 per cent. The risk also increased by 21 per cent for depressed mood, 24 per cent for hopelessness, 24 per cent for anger, 25 per cent for anxiety, 25 per cent for desire to self-harm, 28 per cent for functional problems and 28 per cent for suicide ideation. "The fact that sleep health was so strongly related to mental health is important since the majority of college students don't get the recommended amount of sleep needed for optimal health and functioning," said Michael Grander from the varsity. — IANS

Easy ways to help manage your asthma during summers

June 08, 2019/ The Indian Express

As the temperature soars in summer, people with mild asthma may find it a little difficult to cope up with increased heat and humidity which often makes breathing laborious. As your body tries to cool itself, it uses more oxygen, making the lungs work harder. Knowing how to manage your asthma in these conditions will help you evade the symptoms, and enjoy even the hottest of summer days. Below, Dr Prashant Chhajed, head of respiratory medicine, Hiranandani Hospital, Vashi- A Fortis Network Hospital shares a few triggers of the condition and suggests ways to manage it. Summer can intensify environmental factors such as pollen or pollution. Bad air quality makes people with asthma vulnerable to breathing difficulties and asthma attacks. Amplified air pollution from smog and higher pollen count is bad for the lungs. This may trigger asthma symptoms like coughing and shortness of breath. Heat and humidity offer a productive breeding ground for allergens like molds and dust mites (which commonly thrive in humid air). Sudden changes in the weather can trigger an asthma attack; this could be as simple as a refreshing cool breeze or increased humidity. Moreover, windy weather can cause further discomfort to individuals who suffer from mold, pollen or grass allergies. You must consult an allergist who is an expert in diagnosing and handling allergic and asthmatic diseases. They can help you develop 'asthma action plans' to ensure that you don't bear the brunt of changing temperatures and seasons. During summer, if close attention is paid to a child's medication regimen, children with asthma can play the sport of their choice freely. It is important for the coach to be aware of the child's asthmatic condition though. Both your child and coach should be able to recognise symptoms and know when your child should stop the activity and use a quick-relief inhaler. Keep your asthma inhalers out of direct sunlight and out of places known to get too hot, such as the glove compartment of your car. Your inhalers should stay close-by and cool. No matter the weather, take your controller medications regularly and keep your relief inhaler with you. You wouldn't know when asthma symptoms may strike, particularly in extreme temperatures.

High-res snapshot of chikungunya virus may lead to drugs, vaccines

June 09, 2019/ The Indian Express



Scientists have snapped high-resolution pictures of the chikungunya virus latched onto a protein found on the surface of cells in the joints, an advance that may pave the way for new treatments against the infection. Most people who become infected with chikungunya virus develop fever and joint pain that last about a week. However, in up to half of patients, the virus can cause severe arthritis that persists for months or years. There is no treatment to prevent the short-lived infection from persisting into chronic arthritis. Researchers have uncovered information that could help stop the debilitating condition. Chikungunya and its cousins — Mayaro, Ross River and O'nyong-nyong viruses — belong to a family of alphaviruses that are spread by mosquitoes and cause joint pain. In recent years, such viruses have been infecting people and animals in ever larger regions of the globe. To design effective drugs and vaccines, researchers need a detailed picture of the molecular interactions between the virus and the protein. Images were obtained using a chikungunya virus-like particle — which has the shape of a virus but cannot cause infections because it carries no genetic material inside — as well as fully infectious chikungunya virus. The virus-like particles are being evaluated in clinical trials as a potential vaccine for chikungunya. To visualise how the virus interacts with the cell-surface protein, the researchers first flash-froze the viral particles attached to the protein. The snap freeze was necessary to keep the particles from being destroyed during the experiment. Then, the researchers shot a beam of electrons through the sample, mapped where the electrons landed on a detector, and used computer programs to reconstruct the electron density patterns and thereby the 3D structure of the viral particles bound to the cell-surface protein.

Junk food consumption ups allergy risk in kids

June 09, 2019/ The Tribune

Researchers have found that high consumption of junk food such as microwaved foods and barbecued meats may be responsible for food allergies in children. The study, presented at the 52nd Annual Meeting of the European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology Hepatology and Nutrition, shows that high levels of advanced glycation end-products (AGEs) are associated with food allergies in kids. AGEs are present in high levels in junk foods such as sugars, processed foods, microwaved foods and roasted or barbecued meats. They are known to play a role in the development and progression of different oxidative-based diseases including diabetes, atherosclerosis and neurological disorders, said the researchers. For the study, the research team observed 61 children aged between 6 and 12 years. They were identified in three categories - those with food allergies, those with respiratory allergies and healthy controls. The study revealed a significant correlation between AGEs and junk food consumption, said Roberto Berni Canani, Associate Professor at the University of Naples Federico II in Italy. — IANS

Why smokers are thrice more prone to chronic back pain

June 09, 2019/ The Indian Express

Smoking is often seen as a risk factor for multiple medical issues. However, its relation to musculoskeletal conditions, like that of back pain, is rarely understood and evaluated. In spite of regular exercise, a healthy diet plan, and a proper lifestyle, you may experience chronic back pain if you are addicted to smoking or often breathe in second-hand smoke. While common awareness brings in the understanding that smoking can lead to cancer and cardiovascular diseases, not everyone is aware of the fact that smoking can also cause lower back pain or further worsen an existing back condition. Worldwide research suggests that smokers are thrice more likely to experience chronic back pain and are also more likely to develop physical disabilities at an earlier age as compared to non-smokers.

“Cigarette smoking reduces calcium absorption, prevents new bone growth and slows down the spine’s healing process. Coughing due to heavy smoking can also lead to increased intra-abdominal pressures which may further add to the back pain” says Dr Neha Narula, senior spine specialist, QI Spine Clinic, who suggests three important reasons why one should quit smoking immediately. Nicotine in tobacco triggers the release of a chemical (dopamine), which tricks the body into reducing stress and thus feeling good. Hence, smoking becomes addictive to the body. However, the same tobacco impairs the oxygen-rich blood flow to the bones and tissues thus leading to early signs of degeneration which may further lead to impaired bone and wound healing. It also prevents new bone growth and increases the risk of osteoporosis. Reduced cardiovascular capacity and fatigue weaken the muscles which make it difficult for the muscles to support the spine. Interestingly, smoking alters the way you perceive pain. Nicotine affects the functioning of the brain and heightens a person’s reaction to pain. The connection between the nucleus accumbens and medial prefrontal cortex is altered, making a person less resilient to back pain. A study conducted in 2010 that examined the pathophysiology between smoking and pain indicated that long-term smoking causes receptor desensitisation, creating a perception in smokers that a relatively small amount of pain is severe. This can further alter the effectiveness of opioids prescribed for pain management. Smoking also impairs the normal functioning of the immune system and increases the risk of infection in the body.

Nicotine in e-cigarettes raises chronic bronchitis risk: Study

June 10, 2019/ Times of India

E-cigarette vaping with nicotine not only hampers mucus clearance from the airways but also increases the risk of chronic bronchitis, warn researchers. A single session of vaping can deliver more nicotine in the airways than smoking one cigarette, researchers explained in a study published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine. The study's findings showed that vaping with nicotine impaired ciliary beat frequency dehydrates airway fluid and made mucus more viscous or sticky. These changes make it more difficult for the bronchi, the main passageways to the lung, to defend themselves from infection and injury. "Vaping with nicotine is not harmless as commonly assumed by those who start vaping. At the very least, it increases the risk of chronic bronchitis," Salathe said. The researchers observed that exposing human airway cells to e-cigarette vapour containing nicotine resulted in a decreased ability to move mucus or phlegm across the surface. This phenomenon is called "mucociliary dysfunction." Mucociliary dysfunction is a feature of many lung diseases, including asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and cystic fibrosis.

Diabetic Foot Ulcers Can Be Deadly — This New Treatment May Be the Answer

June 10, 2019/ Health Line

Every day about 230 people in the United States will undergo amputation as a direct result of a diabetic foot ulcer. That’s according to Dr. Foluso A. Fakorede, a cardiologist in Mississippi who specializes in internal medicine, in a column he published in The American Journal of Managed Care. Fakorede notes that every 30 seconds throughout the globe a leg is amputated — and 85 percent of those amputations are the result of a diabetic foot ulcer that wasn’t successfully treated. Research has found that people undergoing amputation are more often male, cigarette smokers Trusted Source, and people with kidney disease, diabetic neuropathy, peripheral artery disease, and hypertension. They’re an average of 64 years old. A new type 2 diabetes diagnosis occurs every 17 seconds. And despite ongoing efforts to develop more effective diabetes medications to manage blood sugar levels, people with diabetes requiring amputation is rising — by 50 percent between 2009 and 2015. Preventing amputation isn’t just about saving a leg. It’s also about saving a life due to a severe spike in death rates after amputation. More than

50 percent of people with diabetes who undergo amputation will die within five years of the procedure. However, there's a promising new treatment in which a person's skin cells are used to grow new skin. If it continues to prove successful, the therapy could revolutionize treatment for problematic foot ulcers. The cost of caring for lower extremity wounds in patients with diabetes is also a concern. People with diabetes who have foot ulcers will find themselves at their doctor's office an average of 14 times per year when following the standard treatment plan. They also can be hospitalized once or twice a year, tallying up to \$33,000 per year in healthcare costs, according to a 2011 study Trusted Source on Medicare patients. That study found that patients who've already undergone an amputation of their toe, foot, or leg will see annual healthcare costs at about \$50,000. SkinTE is expected to cost much less, according to Lough. Frania adds that SkinTE is also more easily covered by insurance because it's a simple outpatient procedure and doesn't require prior authorization like many other treatment methods.

Millions of heart disease, stroke deaths linked to not eating enough fruits, vegetables: Study

June 10, 2019/ The Indian Express

Inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption may account for millions of deaths from heart disease and strokes each year across the globe, a study has found. The study estimated that roughly one in seven cardiovascular deaths could be attributed to not eating enough fruit and one in 12 cardiovascular deaths could be attributed to not eating enough vegetables. Low fruit intake resulted in nearly 1.8 million cardiovascular deaths in 2010, while low vegetable intake resulted in one million deaths, researchers said. Overall, the toll of suboptimal fruit intake was almost double that of vegetables. The impacts were most acute in countries with the lowest average intakes of fruits and vegetables. "Fruits and vegetables are a modifiable component of diet that can impact preventable deaths globally," said Victoria Miller, a postdoctoral researcher at Tufts University in the US. "Our findings indicate the need for population-based efforts to increase fruit and vegetable consumption throughout the world," Miller said. Based on data from 2010, the scientists estimated that suboptimal fruit consumption results in nearly 1.3 million deaths from stroke and more than 520,000 deaths from coronary heart disease worldwide each year. Suboptimal vegetable consumption was estimated to result in about 200,000 deaths from stroke and more than 800,000 deaths from coronary heart disease. The impact of inadequate fruit and vegetable intake was greatest in countries with the lowest fruit and vegetable consumption. Countries in South Asia, East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa had low fruit intake and high rates of associated stroke deaths. Countries in Central Asia and Oceania had low vegetable intake and high rates of associated coronary heart disease. In the US, suboptimal vegetable intake may account for 82,000 cardiovascular deaths while suboptimal fruit intake accounted for 57,000 deaths.

Compounds from scorpion venom may help treat bacterial infections

June 11, 2019/ The Tribune

Scientists have discovered two colour-changing compounds in scorpion venom that could help fight bacterial infections such as drug-resistant tuberculosis. The researchers from National University of Mexico and Stanford University in the US isolated the compounds in the venom of *Diplocentrus melici*—a scorpion native to Eastern Mexico. They also synthesised the compounds in the lab and verified that the lab-made versions killed staphylococcus and drug-resistant tuberculosis bacteria in tissue samples and in mice. The findings, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, highlight the potential pharmacological treasures awaiting discovery in the toxins of scorpions, snakes, snails and other poisonous creatures. "By volume, scorpion venom is one of the most precious materials in the world. It would cost USD 39 million to produce a gallon of it," said Richard Zare, who led the research team. They investigated this unusual colour-change, they found two chemical compounds that they believed were responsible. One of the compounds turned red when exposed to air, while the other turned

blue. Using a tiny sample of the venom, researchers were able to work out the molecular structure of the two compounds. The group confirmed the compounds' structures when, through much trial and error, they learned how to synthesise them. The researchers found that the red compound was particularly effective at killing the highly infectious staphylococcus bacteria, while the blue one was lethal to both normal and multi-drug-resistant strains of tuberculosis-causing bacteria. The team also showed that the blue compound kills tuberculosis bacteria but leaves the lining of the lungs in mice intact. "The amount of venom components we can get from the animals is extremely low. The synthesis of the compounds was decisive for the success of this work," Possani said. — PTI



Vitamin D Supplements May Help People with Cancer Live Longer

June 11, 2019/ The Healthline

Vitamin D supplements, if taken for multiple years, may add years of life to those with cancer. In a recent study conducted at Michigan State University, researchers found that vitamin D, if taken for at least three years, could help people with cancer live longer. In the study, which was presented at the American Society of Clinical Oncology annual meeting this month and published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology, the researchers looked at a population of almost 80,000 people with cancer with an average age of 68 years old and 10 randomized controlled trials. They focused on the use of vitamin D supplementation and its effects on cancer risk and death. The authors found that vitamin D supplementation was associated with a significant reduction of cancer-related death compared to placebo. Using the database search, the researchers found that those using vitamin D supplements for at least three years had a 13 percent reduced risk of death from all cancers in comparison to placebo effects. Although these results are promising, compared with placebo, vitamin D didn't show a reduction in cancer incidence. The benefits only came into play once cancer had already manifested. Dr. Tarek Haykal, a lead study author and second-year internal medicine resident physician at Michigan State University and Hurley Medical Center in Flint, Michigan, said in a released statement, "Vitamin D had a significant effect on lowering the risk of death among those with cancer, but unfortunately it did not show any proof that it could protect against getting cancer." Share Although vitamin D is naturally found in the environment and is many times supplemented in food, the exact amount of vitamin D that's necessary to protect against death is still unknown. Despite this study showing results which could reduce death, Chandra says much work still needs to be done. "The safety of giving vitamin D to people with cancer and making sure it doesn't interfere with therapy is of utmost importance. There may be benefits for some cancer diagnoses, but not others," she said.

Why You Probably Shouldn't Give Antacids to Infants

June 12, 2019/ Healthline

An infant's pain or distress can be heartbreaking to watch for some new parents. We instinctively want to make them better as quickly as possible. But sometimes the easiest solution comes with unintended consequences. A new study published this month in the journal Pediatrics concludes that infants who are given antacids in their first year of life have a significantly higher risk for bone fractures as they get older. Infant reflux, also called gastroesophageal reflux (GER), is when stomach acid flows back into the tube connecting a baby's mouth and stomach. It's one reason why babies spit up. This condition Trusted Source is rarely serious. It happens less frequently as baby gets older, typically resolving by 18 months. "Infant reflux is common and normal in young infants and is frequently implicated as a cause of fussiness by parents and providers," Elizabeth Hisle-Gorman, PhD, the study's corresponding author and an assistant professor of pediatrics at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Maryland, told Healthline. Antacids aren't the only way to relieve GER symptoms. There are simple actions parents can take on their own. "I always recommend behavioral interventions before moving on to other options," Jossen said. She recommends that parents try

“smaller, more frequent feeds and holding the infant upright for at least 20 minutes after a bottle as the first intervention.” “They should also be sure the babies are burping adequately,” she said, “and when bottle-feeding, check if the flow of the nipple is too fast.” Some infants can experience excessive spitting up and discomfort after feeding that’s called gastroesophageal reflux, or GER. When the symptoms are bad enough that a baby doesn’t put on weight and experiences prolonged discomfort, it’s called GERD. However, recent research concludes these drugs may be ineffective. Certain classes of antacids may also raise the risk of bone fracture. Experts say there are methods and dietary changes that should be tried first before using medications.

Life expectancy in India down by 2.6 yrs due to air pollution: Study

June 12, 2019/ The Tribune

Life expectancy in India has gone down by 2.6 years due to deadly diseases caused by air pollution, according to a recent report by an environment think tank. The report by the environment organisation Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) revealed that outdoor and household air pollution together are causing deadly diseases. “Air pollution is now the third highest cause of death among all health risks ranking just above smoking in India. This is a combined effect of outdoor particulate matter (PM) 2.5, ozone and household air pollution. "Due to this combined exposure, South Asians, including Indians are dying early -- their life expectancy has reduced by over 2.6 years. This is much higher than the global tally of reduced life expectancy by an average of 20 months. While globally a child born today will die 20 months sooner on an average than would be expected without air pollution in India they would die 2.6 years earlier,” the report released by the CSE said. The report referred to two review papers by scientists from the Forum of International Respiratory Societies and said air pollution can harm acutely as well as chronically, potentially affecting every organ in the body. "According to the study, ultra-fine particles pass through lungs are taken up by cells and carried via the bloodstream to expose virtually all cells in the body. Air pollution may be damaging every organ and virtually every cell in the human body, according to a comprehensive new global review recently reported," the CSE said. The research shows head-to-toe harm, from heart and lung disease to diabetes and dementia, and from liver problems, brain, intelligence, abdominal organs, reproduction, and bladder cancer to brittle bones and damaged skin. Fertility, fetuses and children are also affected by toxic air, it said.

Being overweight doubles blood pressure risk in kids

June 13, 2019/ The Tribune

Researchers have found that overweight kids have a doubled risk of high blood pressure, raising the risk of future heart attacks and strokes. Published in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology, the study shows that obese four-year-old kids have a doubled risk of high blood pressure by age six. "Parents need to be more physically active with young children and provide a healthy diet. Women should shed extra pounds before becoming pregnant, avoid gaining excess weight during pregnancy and quit smoking, as these are all established risk factors for childhood obesity," said study lead author Inaki Galan from Carlos III Health Institute in Spain. For the study, the research team examined the link between excess weight and high blood pressure in 1,796 kids who were followed up two years later. Blood pressure was measured at both points, as Body Mass Index (BMI) and Waist Circumference (WC). Compared to children maintaining a healthy weight between ages four and six, those with new or persistent excess weight according to BMI had 2.49 and 2.54 higher risk of high blood pressure, respectively. In those with new or persistent abdominal obesity, the risks for high blood pressure were 2.81 and 3.42 greater, respectively. "There is a chain of risk, whereby overweight and obesity lead to high blood pressure, which heightens the chance of cardiovascular disease if allowed to track into adulthood, but the results show that children who return to a normal weight also regain a healthy blood pressure," said Galan. According to Galan, the best way to maintain a

healthy weight and lose excess kilos is to exercise and eat a healthy diet. In addition to the central role of parents, the school curriculum needs to include three to four hours of physical activity every week. Galan noted that overweight in children is most accurately assessed using both BMI and WC. — IANS



India can lead the way in nutritious, sustainable diet, say experts

June 13, 2019/ Hindustan Times

Traditional Indian food that is largely plant-based with some red meat and fish can show the world how a nutritious and sustainable diet can be provided to the world's projected population of 10 billion people by 2050 without environmental degradation, said global experts who drafted the world's first scientific targets for sustainable nutrition within planetary boundaries at EAT Stockholm Food Forum 2019 on Wednesday. "Grain-fed beef industry is the beginning of the end and India can show the world how traditional diets high in seeds, nuts, vegetables, whole grains and legumes can provide sustainable nutrition without wrecking the planet," said Johan Rockstrom, director, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany. Rockstrom, along with Dr Walter Willet, Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition at Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, is a co-author of the EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet, Health report that draws on inputs from 37 experts from 16 countries, including India, to conclude that providing nutrition and sustainability is achievable only by transforming eating behaviours, improving food production, and halving food waste. Food, mostly red meat, production has emerged as the biggest cause of land-use change, biodiversity loss, and natural water depletion and accounts for about a fourth of greenhouse gas emissions. "As nations urbanise and people become wealthier, traditional meals are being replaced by Western-style resource-intensive foods high in calories, protein, and animal-based foods," said Rockstrom. Dominant diets and food production are not nutritionally optimal. At least 820 million people are hungry worldwide, and close to 2 billion people are overweight or obese because they eat the wrong food. The EAT-daily dietary plate consists of approximately 35% of calories from whole grains and tubers, protein from plant sources and 500g of vegetables and fruits a day, and 14 gm of red meat. South Asia, including India, is an exception to meat consumption, with the majority eating half of the recommended amount. Countries in the North America, by comparison, eat almost 6.5 times the recommended amount of red meat.

Toxic substance in lychee killing children in Bihar: Reports

June 14, 2019/ Times of India

According to reports, 50 children have died in the past three weeks in the state of Bihar from a deadly brain disease, which is reportedly linked to lychee. It is believed that lychee has a toxic substance that is leading to the deaths. This outbreak has been occurring for the past 24 years (since 1995) in and around Muzaffarpur, at the time of the lychee season. While the health department of the state is blaming hypoglycemia (drop in blood sugar) as the cause of death, they have also said that lychee also has some role to play in these fatalities - since the areas affected have lush lychee growth in this season. Kumar further added, "International experts have told us that lychee has some kind of toxin that goes and deposits in the liver of these children, and when the temperatures go up, those toxins get released. The fact is that [Muzaffarpur] is a lychee-growing area. We suspect that there is some kind of role that lychee has in the case. But it is also true that once the temperature comes down and the rains come, lychee or no lychee, there are no more cases." As per reports, parents of the affected kids shared that most children spent their day eating lychees and almost all of them skipped having dinner. Reportedly, children who skipped the meal were more prone to night time hypoglycaemia. Urine samples of the affected kids showed exposure to toxins in the seeds of lychee that are commonly found in

unripe fruits. And these toxins heavily impair the glucose synthesis in the body - leading to drop in BP and brain inflammation. The affected kids are malnourished and belong to poor families. State health officials have advised parents not to feed their children lychees on an empty stomach and have half-ripe or unripe litchis.



World Blood Donor Day 2019: Important things to know before you donate blood

June 14, 2019/ The Indian Express

In India, the need for blood arises every two seconds – it may arise due to surgery, heavy injury, or to treat a life threatening disease which requires blood components. India is the second most populous country in the world and ironically, while there is a need for 4 crore units of blood annually, only 40 lakh units are available. This huge gap can be reduced by donating blood and spreading awareness about blood donation to increase the number of donors. Human blood is important to save lives. While it may sound intimidating, blood donation is quite safe and simple. However, there are a lot of myths and questions around the subject making it a daunting process for people to come forward and donate blood. Even though it is a simple process, blood donation has few rules and measures to ensure the safety of the donor as well as the receiver. The golden rule is to not donate blood on an empty stomach. A wholesome and nutritious meal must be consumed at least a couple of hours before donation, so that it can digest properly and can help in stabilising your blood sugar levels. Donating blood on an empty stomach may make you feel nauseous or uneasy post donation. Also, avoid being on a strict diet, especially if you are a regular donor. It has been observed that the primary cause of dizziness and fatigue after donating blood has been lack of sleep and hydration, which results in a drop in blood pressure. Therefore, it is essential to rest well, along with consuming plenty of water or juice (at least 2—3 glasses) before the blood donation process to keep the blood pressure stable. Donating blood helps you in keeping track of your health with the help of the blood test taken prior to the donation. Blood donation burns calories and also reduces the risk of heart diseases. It also reduces the amount of about 225mg to 250 mg of iron from your body, reducing the risk of health complications like irregular heartbeat, muscle weakness, hardening of arteries, accelerated cholesterol oxidation, etc. which can occur due to high blood iron.

With regards,

Syed Adil Shamim Andrabi
Information Interface Officer/PRO
Indian Council of Medical Research-
Department of Health Research
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
proicmr@gmail.com, syed.adil@icmr.gov.in
Ext. 286, Phone. 26589130