

## **Lifestyle Disorders and Its Prevention**

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Lifestyle disorders are a group of diseases; Diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, chronic low back pain, and hyperlipidemia are some of the diseases grouped under this category. Recently, there has been an increasing incidence of lifestyle diseases. One of the important things about these diseases is that they affect even younger people. These are called lifestyle disorders because these diseases are associated with people who adopt unhealthy and inappropriate lifestyles. Improved sanitation, health awareness, and better medical facilities have reduced the incidence of infectious and vector-borne diseases like malaria, cholera, and polio. Still, lifestyle disorders are increasing in both urban and rural areas. The factors responsible for lifestyle disorders are low physical activity, bad food habits, disturbed sleeping patterns, competitive living, and incorrect body posture. The main culprits are the changed living habits due to increasing job requirements, a sedentary lifestyle, and competitive living. People who fall victim to this new phenomenon get trapped with certain diseases at a younger age. A World Economic Forum report says India will suffer a loss of more than \$200 billion due to improper diets and lifestyles. However, the good news is that most lifestyle disorders are preventable, and many are reversible.

### **Causes:**

The causes of lifestyle disorders are eating unhealthy foods, overeating, and over-dependence on processed foods, energy drinks, and artificial sweeteners. Sedentary living, smoking, drinking alcohol, stress, and poor sleeping habits worsen the situation. In addition, minimal exposure to sun and fresh air, anxiety, and modern-day urbanization have deteriorated the situation further.

The nature and duration of work and recreation, the time you spend with your loved ones, the stress factors, etc., decide how soon you will likely land up in any lifestyle disorders. The amount and duration of physical exercise, irregular sleeping habits, poor posture, etc., are a few other factors that decide the onset of these lifestyle disorders. People who eat a high-calorie diet without adequate exercise are in greater danger of lifestyle disorders.

### **Some specific Lifestyle Disorders:**

Heart disease is not a single disorder or condition. It refers to a group of diseases or problems in which the heart or vessels supplying blood to the heart are damaged and unable to function normally. Heart diseases are pretty common in young adults, mainly because of a sedentary lifestyle and bad eating habits. Around 116.4 per 100, 000 people in India die due to cerebrovascular diseases.

Hypertension is another lifestyle disorder. The cardiac complications of hypertension are left ventricular failure, congestive cardiac failure, and myocardial infarction. The cerebral complications are cerebrovascular accidents (stroke) and neurological symptoms associated with hypertension. Atherosclerosis is another condition in which cholesterol and fatty substances are deposited on the walls of arteries.

The symptoms of cardiovascular diseases are chest pain, shortness of breath, pain, numbness, weakness or coldness in your legs or arms if the blood vessels in those parts of your body are narrowed. It may be associated with pain in the neck, jaw, throat, upper abdomen or back, palpitations, weakness or dizziness, nausea or sweating.

Obesity is another significant lifestyle problem. According to the National Family Health Survey, 13 percent of women and 9 percent of men in India are overweight or obese. Obesity increases the risk of developing severe health conditions, including coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, cancer, sleep apnoea, gallstones, osteoarthritis, and infertility or irregular periods. Diabetes is another lifestyle disease that's prevalence is very high in India. Though there are various causative factors for Diabetes, the major contributing factor is overeating starchy food containing sugar and carbohydrate, stress, and inadequate physical exercise. Symptoms of type 2 diabetes develop slowly. Increased thirst and frequent urination may be one of the earliest symptoms. Increased hunger, weight loss, fatigue, blurred vision, slow-healing sores or frequent infections, and areas of darkened skin are noticeable symptoms.

Osteoporosis is a lifestyle disease where the bones become too thin and breakable, increasing the risk for fractures. Bones usually tend to lose strength due to low calcium, phosphorous. Osteoporosis mainly occurs in the hip, wrist, and spine. Fractures from osteoporosis are more common in women than men, and the risk increases with age.

Alcoholism is another important lifestyle disorder that can cause alcoholic hepatitis, gastritis, mouth, throat, liver, and colon cancers, elevated blood pressure levels, irregular menstruation in women, and erectile dysfunction in men. Asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary diseases, and lung cancer directly correlate with smoking.

### **Complication of Lifestyle Disorders:**

Lifestyle disorders have their course of complications if not properly attended. An enormous burden is added to the national exchequer due to the requirement of long treatment and the havoc of its complications. Lifestyle disorders can become highly complicated if unattended on time and may need a prolonged treatment procedure. High blood sugar levels increase the dangers of heart attack, atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease, stroke, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and may often lead to kidney failure. Hypertension is associated with congestive cardiac failure, myocardial infarction, hypertensive retinopathy, and uremia.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases (COPD) is a significant complication of respiratory system failure. Excess weight (obesity) increases the risk for many complications like cardiovascular diseases, type II diabetes, osteoarthritis, and stones in the gallbladder.

**Prevention:**

The good thing is that most lifestyle disorders are reversible and can be prevented by fine tuning the lifestyle. A healthy diet and moderate exercise can reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases, including heart disease, stroke, and Diabetes. Some changes, like quitting smoking, avoiding alcohol, regular physical activity, may be a booster in preventing lifestyle diseases. As lifestyle disorders are slow in onset and progression, early diagnosis may not be possible. Once detected, long continued medication may become necessary. To check the spread of lifestyle diseases we need to check health profile regularly. Lifestyle disorders are preventable and reversible if appropriate lifestyle modifications are made well in time.

- A healthy diet is a balanced food that includes fresh vegetables, fruits, minerals, proteins and vitamins.
- Always go for a healthy diet and moderate exercise to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disorders, Obesity and Diabetes.
- Quit smoking immediately if you are a smoker. Say no to tobacco chewing. Avoid alcohol.