



LIFE STYLE DISEASES

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INTRODUCTION

You have learnt about the role of nutrition and environmental sanitization for maintaining goods. We all know that for happy living, it is necessary to remain healthy and free from diseases. However, you must have seen people suffering from diseases. A disease makes a person weak and vulnerable to more suffering. Do you know that a disease, if prolonged, may also result in disability or death? Diseases may be the result of infection in the body such as jaundice or diarrhoea. They may be a result of faulty eating and living habits (life style) like diabetes and hypertension. Many of these diseases such as hypertension, heart disease and diabetes can only be controlled but not cured. In this lesson, you will study about diseases which occur because of infections and faulty life style. You would also learn about their prevention, cure and control in order to lead a productive life.

LIFE STYLE DISEASES

Some diseases do not get spread from one person to another through touch, air, food, water or sexual contacts. These diseases may develop in a person due to faulty eating and living habits e.g., obesity, diabetes and hypertension. These diseases are called **life stylediseases**.

Mohan's mother is a 50 years old diabetic woman. She is quite fat and fond of fried foods and sweets. She depends on her maid for all household work. She does not like to exercise. One day, she felt pain in the chest for which she was immediately taken to the hospital. The doctors diagnosed her with heart problem. Her condition was complicated. She had to be hospitalized for one month for proper treatment and care. It was a large economic burden for the family and also left the family members emotionally and mentally drained.

These days we hear less about infectious diseases like typhoid or cholera. On the other hand, very often we hear about diseases like diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), obesity and heart disease. Have you wondered what causes these diseases? There is no infection in the body, yet these diseases occur. This happens because of the defective lifestyle that we follow.

What is a lifestyle? A lifestyle is the pattern of living that we follow - how we work, what and when we eat, how and when we sleep, how much physical activity we do and whether we smoke or consume alcohol. Lifestyle or non-communicable diseases are chronic (long term) in nature and do not result from an acute (short term) infection nor do they spread from one person to the other. These conditions cause dysfunctioning in the body and impair the quality of life. They may also lead to death. These diseases usually develop relatively over long periods. In the beginning there may not be any symptoms but after the disease sets in there may be a long period of impaired health.

Lifestyle diseases are now seen in developing countries like India and in the younger or productive age group. This leads to reduction in productivity and development of the country. As these are chronic conditions they are a financial burden for lifetime. Therefore, there is an increasing concern these days about lifestyle diseases that can be easily prevented but not cured.

The lifestyle factors associated with these diseases can be of two types-

- i) Modifiable (those that can be changed) like food habits, physical activity level, addiction (smoking, drinking) and stress.
- ii) Non-modifiable (those that cannot be changed) like age and heredity.

You may have observed that

More and more young people are seen smoking and drinking despite knowing the fact that these are harmful to health. Our nutritious and balanced meals are giving way to fast food and junk food, fresh fruits and vegetables are being rejected in favour of processed and packed food and soft drinks are replacing milk. We prefer to use a bus or car instead of walking even for short distances. More and more machines are being developed each day to reduce physical labour associated with our work.

All the above practices have led to our becoming overweight and obese. Obesity is excess body-weight than normal or ideal weight for your height. Obesity is the main underlying causes for other lifestyle diseases like diabetes, hypertension, obesity, heart disease, etc.

Prevention of life style diseases

People need to change their habits in the direction of healthier living. You can do a lot to prevent the occurrence of lifestyle diseases. Some healthy tips are:-

- (i) Take up regular exercise like walking, yoga, dancing, aerobics and cycling.
- (ii) Use stair-case instead of lift or escalator.
- (iii) Take a balanced diet at proper meal times.

Do not over-eat.

- (i) Avoid processed and packaged foods that are rich in sugar, fats, salt and calories and low in fiber, good quality protein, minerals (iron and calcium) and vitamins.
- (ii) Eat whole grains like cereals (wheat, whole wheat flour), millets (jowar, bajra).
- (iii) Avoid refined foods like maida.

(iv) Eat 400 - 500 gms of seasonal fruits and vegetables in a day.

(v) Drink plenty of water.

(vi) Practice yoga or meditation to avoid stress in life.

(vii) Keep away from smoking and drinking alcohol.

(viii) Spend less time in sitting and watching television and (ix) pursue outdoor games and activities like gardening, playing a sport like football, cricket and badminton.

(x) You can educate people around you regarding healthy lifestyle practices. It is possible to keep these diseases under control, if

you make sensible alteration in your lifestyle.

References:

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