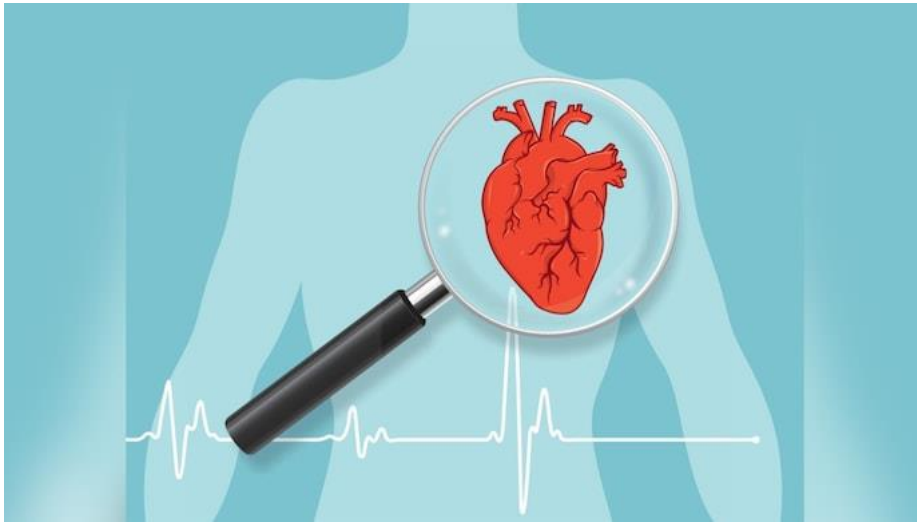


Why do heart attack cases increase in winter?

In winter, cardiac events tend to increase. This happens due to a phenomenon known as vasoconstriction.



A classical symptom of a heart attack is chest pain or angina.

Cardiac events tend to surge in winter, according to experts. While heart attack cases are reported throughout the year, the cold weather can heighten the possibility of heart attacks, especially in people with hypertension.

"In winter, the blood vessels of the body constrict, also known as vasoconstriction. Though this mechanism helps to reduce loss of heat from the body, it also increases the blood pressure of the body or causes hypertension. This means that the heart has to work harder," Dr Vaibhav Mishra, Senior Director, Max Hospital, Patparganj, told India Today's Sneha Mordani.

A classical symptom of a heart attack is chest pain or angina.

Dr Mishra, however, warned that not every chest pain is the same since this kind of pain can also happen in other parts of the body like the jaws, left or right shoulder, and the back. "Any kind of pain or abnormal sensation in the upper part should trigger a warning," he said.

Other symptoms like sweating, feelings of anxiety, palpitations, feelings of giddiness - these are the associated factors as well.

The way you get up in the morning also matters.

"Whenever we rise from a sitting position, the blood from our bodies goes in lower extremities so there is sudden pooling of blood. But in certain people, while this is a normal activity, this could trigger a syncopal episode or a fainting spell. This effect is more common in hypertensive people who are undergoing certain medications," noted Dr Mishra.

Brain strokes are also often reported in the cold months. Strokes happen when the blood flow to the brain is blocked or a blood vessel in the brain bursts. A sudden loss of brain cells.

Dr Bhupendra Kumar, Director, Neurology Medharbour, Gurugram, said, "In winter, our blood is not able to flow freely the way it happens in summer. Due to vasoconstriction, the blood flow gets constricted, due to the narrowing of the blood vessels."

Hypertension should be controlled to avoid brain stroke.

"Keep your blood pressure under control if you're on medications. If possible, keep on taking blood pressure records in our daily records. Keep the saturated levels of fat low in your blood," cautioned Dr Kumar.

Besides these factors, physical activity tends to be lower in winter. Most people, often stay indoors due to the lower temperatures. This factor combined with high-calorie diets can increase the risks of heart attacks and strokes.

Experts recommend increasing light physical activity, wearing warm layers when stepping out, and maintaining a heart-healthy diet including vegetables, fruits, high-fibre content and enough protein.

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