

Where we are going wrong? Your heart health should be the priority

While the nation mourns musician KK's heart-breaking demise after suffering a heart attack on May 31, the middle-aged singer's passing only reiterates the seriousness of cardiovascular disease. The rising cases of cardiac related incidents such as actor Puneeth Rajkumar apart from singer Krishnakumar Kannoth (KK) has alarmed everyone across the nation. Therefore, now more than ever before early diagnosis and management is of the utmost importance to prevent such sudden cardiac incidents.

Nowadays, everyone needs to be cautious and mindful as heart problems and cardiac arrests have been observed in people across all age groups and gender. Heart attacks triggering issues like high blood pressure, insomnia, poor eating habits and lack of physical activity have become a part of life. Every second of the day, your heart works hard to pump blood into your whole body. It's pumping while you're working out, while you're asleep, even when you're reading this on your screen right now. Your heart is crucial to your survival, but it's easy to take this important organ for granted.

According to a recent report, the risk of heart failure has increased by 72% in the last two years. In addition, Indus health plus conducted a study to observe trends related to heart health based on the healthcare check-ups done from the period April 2020 – May 2022 where it is clearly shown that 55% males and 30% females have indicated abnormal results during coronary angiography of heart. The sample size of the study was 20,500 people. This indicates the need for early detection and lifestyle changes across the country. Moreover, there are some most common signs of heart attack which people tend to ignore and often misunderstand it to be the reason behind some other ailment and delay in health screening or consulting a doctor.

Warning signs that people usually ignore:

- **Shortness of breath:** You may feel incapable of getting your breath back.
- **Tiring-out:** If the heart is unable to pump enough blood to meet the needs of your body, you may feel unusual fatigue.
- **Chest pain (angina):** You may feel pressure or tightness in the chest. Some people say it feels like someone is standing on their chest.

Apart from that, it has been observed that around 90% of cardiovascular disease can be attributable to risk factors, which can be substantially reduced by some of the following healthy heart and liver interventions.

Risk factors of cardiac arrest

Diet: A large body of evidence supports that adherence to a DASH diet is linked to improved BP, Body weight, glucose-insulin homeostasis, blood lipids and lipoproteins, inflammation grade endothelial function and total mortality. Unhealthy eating is a major risk factor for heart disease. To reduce the risk, a balanced diet made up of plenty of fruits and vegetables, complex carbohydrates and protein should be focused on and excess fat, salts and sugars avoided.

Genetics: There is a genetic element to heart disease, which means that the family history of the disease is considered a risk factor. In general, this applies if a person's first-degree relative developed CVD at an age that may be considered relatively young. Family history of hypertension (hypertension), elevated cholesterol may also increase its chances of developing such conditions, which in turn may increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Cholesterol: High levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, or bad cholesterol, are linked to a range of cardiovascular diseases. Cholesterol is an oily substance that proteins carry into the body. Limit LDL cholesterol to a specific target number. Lifestyle factors such as eating foods high in saturated and trans fats can increase LDL cholesterol.

One of the most important things you can do is to consult your doctor for a regular or yearly medical examination. Regular blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, physical tests, and have a discussion about your lifestyle risk factors, all this can be done as part of a regular or annual review – are important for keeping your heart healthy. Make sure to follow your doctor's recommendations, including taking prescribed medications and regular test as described. Apart from that, new technologies have emerged, such as genetic testing, which gives you an understanding of the genetic risks associated with your heart health and allows you to take preventative measures before it's too late. Therefore, don't wait for something bad to happen, take the time to invest in your heart health today to make sure it continues to deliver a strong pace.

A healthy lifestyle can help maintain strong, plaque-free arteries. To improve heart health, follow these tips:

- Quit smoking.
- Control high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes.
- Exercise often.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a low-fat, low-salt diet that's rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Go for regular screening and get an understanding of genetic risk/predisposition