



Consider your child's exposure to indoor air pollution

DR NUR-A-SAFRINA RAHMAN

Indoor air pollution is a serious problem in developing nations because of stoves, secondhand smoke, dust mites, mold, bacteria, cleaning products, and more. These sources release volatile compounds. The most studied indoor air pollutant is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). These pollutants can harm women and small children who spend most of their time at home.

Exposure to these components can cause

- According to nationwide population-based research in Bangladesh, NO₂ decreases oxygen to the growing foetus, causing respiratory issues. It also causes low birth weight.
- NO₂ raises harmful compounds in the blood and affects the immune system, weakening the placenta and causing premature delivery.
- Prenatal NO₂ exposure may impede cognitive development and memory in children. High NO₂ levels may disrupt the blood-brain barrier, allowing hazardous chemicals to enter the brain.
- NO₂ weakens the immune system, making children more prone to infections and diseases.

Measures to be taken

- Make your house smoke-free. Ventilation is the simplest approach to reducing indoor pollution.
 - Use High Efficiency Particle Arresting (HEPA) filters, which remove extremely small airborne pollutants. Use active units too. Air filters use filter media to purify air. Scrubbers use liquids or chemicals to remove pollutants from the air.
 - It is also recommended to use an electric stove instead of a gas stove for cooking.
 - Dusting, vacuuming and using a moist cloth or mop frequently can remove dust and other debris.
 - To prevent mold, fix leaks and water damage immediately.
 - Open windows and doors for airflow.
 - Indoor plants remove pollutants and release oxygen. Plant leaves and roots absorb atmospheric pollutants and transform them into nourishment. They release oxygen, which improves room air.
- It is important to note that the effectiveness of these methods will also depend on the pollution sources and surroundings.

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Urgent action is needed as acute malnutrition threatens the lives of millions of vulnerable children

STAR HEALTH REPORT

United Nations agencies are calling for urgent action to protect the most vulnerable children in the 15 countries hardest hit by an unprecedented food and nutrition crisis.

Conflict, climate shocks, the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, and rising costs of living are leaving increasing numbers of children acutely malnourished while key health, nutrition and other life-saving services are becoming less accessible. Currently, more than 30 million children in the 15 worst-affected countries suffer from wasting or acute malnutrition and 8 million of these children are severely wasted, the deadliest form of undernutrition. This is a major threat to children's lives and to their long-term health and development, the impacts of which are felt by individuals, their communities and their countries.

Wasting or acute malnutrition is a form of undernutrition caused by a decrease in food consumption and/or illness that results in sudden weight loss or oedema. Children with acute malnutrition have low weight for height.

Children with acute malnutrition have weakened immune systems and are at higher risk of dying from common childhood diseases. Those that survive could face lifelong growth and development challenges.

Child wasting defined as low weight for height is the most dangerous form of undernutrition. Severe wasting is the deadliest form, as severely wasted children are 12 times more likely to die than a well-nourished child.

In response, five UN agencies are calling for accelerated progress on the Global Action Plan on Child Wasting. It aims to prevent, detect and treat acute malnutrition among children in the worst-affected countries.



The Global Action Plan addresses the need for a multi-sectoral approach and highlights priority actions across maternal and child nutrition through the food, health, water and sanitation, and social protection systems. In response to increasing needs, the UN agencies identified five priority actions that will be effective in addressing acute malnutrition in countries affected by conflict and natural disasters and in humanitarian emergencies. Scaling up these actions as a coordinated package will be critical for preventing and treating acute malnutrition in children and averting a tragic loss of life.

"We must ensure availability, affordability and accessibility of healthy diets for young children, girls, and pregnant and lactating women" said Qu Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

"The UN Global Action Plan on Child Wasting is our joint effort to prevent, detect and treat wasting globally. At UNHCR we are working hard to improve analysis and targeting to ensure that we reach children who are most at risk, including internally displaced and refugees populations." Filippo

Grandi, High Commissioner, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

"Today's cascading crises are leaving millions of children wasted and have made it harder for them to access key services. Wasting is painful for the child, and in severe cases, can lead to death or permanent damage to children's growth and development." Catherine Russell, Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

"It is critical that we collaborate to strengthen social safety nets and food assistance to ensure Specialised Nutritious Foods are available to women and children who need them the most." David Beasley, Executive Director, World Food Programme (WFP).

"The global food crisis is also a health crisis, and a vicious cycle: malnutrition leads to disease, and disease leads to malnutrition," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organisation (WHO).

Urgent support is needed now in the hardest hit countries to protect children's lives and health, including ensuring critical access to healthy foods and nutrition services, especially for women and children."

HAVE A NICE DAY

Living in a toxic society

DR RUBAUL MURSHED

Once a wise man said, "One fake friend is more dangerous than 100 enemies." True friends will always find a way to help, but toxic and fake friends will always find an excuse. Today, a toxic social environment causes more harm to our health, happiness, and wellbeing. People who make us feel bad, or insecure about ourselves can create a toxic environment.

Toxic people do not like to forget and forgive and end up taking revenge. Medicine or other advancements cannot solve this issue alone. Sometimes unkind group behaviour is encouraged in our society and in time, it becomes normalised. Toxic associations create mental trauma and may contribute such a poison to an atmosphere that can lead to stress, anxiety, depression and even suicide. It is important to recognise the warning signs and find ways to avoid them. It is especially true for the mentally ill or people recovering from a history of abuse or unkind incidents.

But, why are people becoming more and more toxic? Although it is not easy to explain, we can say, these behaviours may manifest from underlying feelings of low self-esteem and mental health conditions such as narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), childhood or adolescent trauma, or other deeply rooted personal issues. Sometimes, people who are toxic are dealing with their own traumas and stresses.

Unfortunately, some people with toxic personalities don't realise that their behaviour impacts others. One may have toxic traits that the person does not know about! It is believed that these people can change. But, it is better to be careful and remind ourselves of Aesop's famous saying, "If you choose bad companions, no one will believe that you are anything but bad yourself." That's why! Growing up means realising a lot of our friends are toxic and cutting ties with them can be an act of self-care.

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Understanding testicular cancer

DR OPURBO CHOWDHURY

The testes are a pair of male reproductive organs in the scrotum. Testicles can vary in size, shape, and position from person to person. However, it is usual for one testicle to be slightly larger or suspended lower than the other. The scrotum is a bag of skin that surrounds and protects the testes. It is located outside the body because the optimal temperature for sperm production is slightly lower than the average body temperature.

Cancer types

Testicular cancer is a type of cancer that develops in the testicles. Testicular cancer is relatively rare, but it is most common in men between the ages of 15 and 35. There are two main types of testicular cancer: seminoma and non-seminoma. Seminoma is a type of cancer in the cells that produce sperm, and it is more common in older men. Non-seminoma is a type of cancer that occurs in other cells in the testicle and is more common in younger men.

Cause

The cause of testicular cancer is unknown, but several factors have been identified that may increase a man's risk of developing the disease. These include: Undescended testicles, family history, personal history, Klinefelter syndrome, HIV infection.



Symptoms

Symptoms of testicular cancer may include a painless swelling in the testicle, a change in the size or form of the testicle, a feeling of heaviness in the scrotum, or a dull ache in the lower abdomen or scrotum. If you have any of these symptoms, it is essential to see a doctor as soon as possible, as testicular cancer is most treatable when it is caught in its early stages.

Tests

Some steps may be involved in diagnosing testicular cancer: physical examination, blood tests, ultrasound, and biopsy.

Treatment

Treatment for testicular cancer may include surgery to remove the affected testicle, radiation therapy, or chemotherapy. The type of treatment will vary depending on the cancer stage and the patient's overall health. Surgery is usually the first line

of treatment for testicular cancer. Radiation therapy uses high-energy beams of radiation to kill cancer cells. Chemotherapy uses drugs to kill cancer cells.

Complications

Some possible complications of untreated testicular cancer include spreading to different parts of the body, difficulty breathing, and lymphedema.

The outlook for patients with testicular cancer is generally excellent. The 5-year survival rate for testicular cancer is over 95% when the cancer is detected and treated at an early stage. However, it is essential for men to be aware of the signs and symptoms of testicular cancer and to seek medical attention if they have any concerns. Early detection and treatment are critical to a successful outcome.

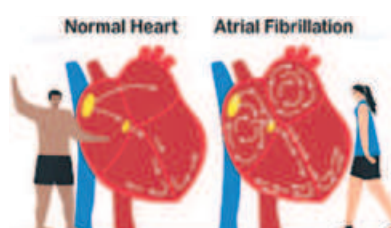
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Warning signs of atrial fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation (AFib) is a condition that disrupts your heartbeat. A glitch in the heart's electrical system makes its upper chambers (the atria) beat so fast they quiver or fibrillate. This causes the lower chambers (the ventricles) to beat out of sync. AFib can be dangerous because it raises your risk of stroke and heart failure.

Warning signs

- For many people, AFib symptoms are not obvious. But when there are, they will often include:
- An uneven pulse
 - A racing or pounding heart
 - A feeling that your heart is fluttering
 - Chest pain
 - Feeling short of breath



- Lightheaded or dizzy

When it is an emergency

AFib is not always a cause for alarm. But you should call for ambulance if you have:

- Chest pain
- Uneven pulse and feel faint
- Signs of a stroke, such as numbness or slurred speech

- And let your doctor know whenever something doesn't feel right.

Prevention

The same healthy habits that protect against heart disease will protect you against AFib:

- Eat a nutritious diet that includes fish.
- Exercise regularly.
- Control your blood pressure.
- Don't smoke and avoid second-hand smoke.
- Decrease or avoid alcohol.
- To catch an irregular heartbeat early, the National Stroke Association recommends you check your pulse once a month, especially if you are over 40 or have other risk factors for stroke.



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