

Preventive healthcare is a must for working women

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Over the last few years, studies have revealed that the general health levels of working women (ages 25 to 45) have been declining steadily. Dr Anita Suryanarayanan Vice President Operations (South and Sri Lanka), Metropolis Healthcare Ltd. shares her views on preventive healthcare for working women.



The constant race between her work, social obligations, and family life has made the career woman weak and susceptible to serious health issues. Whether it's social conditioning or a woman's innate nature, she always put others before her. Proof reading contracts, ensuring the maid comes in on time, helping kids with their math homework; the list of things a woman has to manage in a single day can keep extending by the second. In this mode of constant strategic planning and staying ahead of every possible situation, the woman – her own individual self – takes a back seat.

Over the last few years, studies have revealed that the general health levels of working women (ages 25 to 45) have been declining steadily. Women are more likely to develop lifestyle and stress induced diseases. Those with no history of diabetes, blood pressure or obesity in the family are being diagnosed with serious cases. The reproductive health of women has suffered increasingly too. All of this can be largely attributed to a number of external factors, but the key cause is pushing one's own health at the bottom of the priority list.

A majority of working professionals today are living the most stressed and unhealthy lives. They don't sleep enough, don't eat well or skip meals, depend on hazardous processed food for convenience and instant energy boosts, they don't exercise or even move about during the day, and breathing in unhealthy air. Demanding work and personal lives compromise their healthy mental state too. And if you're a woman, your problems just increase 10-fold. It doesn't matter that you don't have time to eat, but you need to ensure your family is fed and nourished. A woman may not have time to rest and recover from a viral infection but needs to make time to ensure the children are healthy and well cared for. If the woman is not married or living away from her family, there's added pressure of being a dutiful daughter. In addition to this, professional women have to fight everyday to make their marks in male dominated workplaces. The discrimination and harassment most women face has led to increasing instances of clinical depression.

Over the last few years, lifestyle diseases like obesity, fatigue, backaches, vitamin deficiency, osteoporosis, diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and various heart ailments have become increasingly frequent in women aged 22 and above. On the serious side of the spectrum, more and more women in both urban and rural areas are developing cancers of the breast, cervix, ovaries, and stomach. Increasing dependence on alcohol and cigarettes has made lung and liver cancer a common occurrence in women too.

When one is in such a pre-occupied and disturbed state of functioning, it may not always be easy to notice the early signs of a condition. That's where preventive measures can go a long way in keeping oneself strong and healthy. Tracking a health ailment at a young age makes treatment easier and more effective. Since most of these conditions can be genetically passed on, taking preventive care seriously doesn't just benefit the woman but also a whole new generation.

Doctors recommend a regular routine check-up with some common tests one should get regularly done to keep a track of their health. These include, but are not restricted to, testing for Anaemia, Thalassaemia, Complete Haemogram (CBC), Vitamin B12 and Vitamin D deficiency. Whether there is a family history or not, test for Diabetes, Liver, Kidney, Heart, and Bone has now become imperative for women as they are more likely to develop these conditions due to external and changing internal factors. Women are also recommended staying aware of cancer symptoms and self-examine as often as possible and consulting a doctor as soon as they notice something abnormal. To a layman these tests may appear regular and often a waste of time and money, but a slight imbalance in certain figures or a combination of imbalances may be pointing out to a condition one may be developing. And as such, regular testing will help doctors detect these health issues early on and treat them effectively.

Besides, most people don't know this but preventive health checks up to Rs. 5000/- help you save tax under section 80D of the income tax act. Overall analysis at the young age makes a better tomorrow, in every possible way.