NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES ARE PREVENTABLE AND TREATABLE.
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<th>Be physically active</th>
<th>Avoid alcohol</th>
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<td>Cut down on salt and sugar</td>
<td>Don’t use tobacco products</td>
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<td>Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables</td>
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Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are diseases of long duration, and are generally slow to progress. NCDs are the number one killers globally, claiming nearly 36 million lives each year. The most common NCDs are cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke), cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes. NCDs are largely caused by unhealthy lifestyles or risky behaviours – tobacco use, unhealthy diet, insufficient physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol. The presence of these risky behaviours leads to metabolic changes: overweight/obesity, raised blood pressure, raised blood glucose and raised cholesterol levels. Left uncontrolled, these metabolic conditions result in chronic NCDs.

The good news is that the majority of illnesses and deaths due to NCDs can be avoided by preventing and controlling the risk behaviours.

A healthy lifestyle during childhood and youth can prevent the onset of NCDs later in adulthood. Detection and management of NCDs at an early stage can prevent complications and premature death. This information booklet provides important information about NCDs and how individuals can prevent and manage these diseases.
Just 30 minutes of physical activity a day can reduce YOUR risk of cancer, diabetes and heart disease

Lose a few kilos and gain a few years

World Health Organization
Regional Office for South-East Asia
Diabetes mellitus

**What is Diabetes mellitus?**

- **Diabetes mellitus** is characterized by increased blood glucose levels.\(^1\)
- It is caused by defects in insulin secretion from the pancreas, defects in insulin action, or both.
- Symptoms include
  — Excessive urination (polyuria)
  — Excessive thirst (polydipsia)
  — Weight loss
  — Excessive eating (polyphagia), and
  — Blurred vision.
- In the long term, diabetes can damage various organs such as the eyes, kidneys, nerves, blood vessels and heart.
- The risk factors for developing diabetes include a family history of diabetes, obesity, leading a sedentary lifestyle, hypertension, deranged lipid profile or history of diabetes during pregnancy.
- In some patients, blood glucose levels can be controlled by lifestyle modifications and/or oral glucose-lowering medications. Those who are not

\(^1\) Diabetes mellitus is defined as a fasting plasma glucose concentration ≥7 mmol/L (or 126 mg/dL) or being on medication for raised blood glucose.
controlled on these medications require insulin injections.

- Regular monitoring and check-ups are required for treatment to be effective and prevent complications.
How you can prevent and manage Diabetes mellitus

- Modify your lifestyle:
  - Maintain your body weight with a balanced diet.
  - Exercise regularly (brisk walking, running, swimming for at least 30 minutes each day for a minimum of five days a week).
  - Stop smoking.

- Get tested regularly for diabetes if risk factors are present.

- Take blood sugar-lowering medicines as recommended by your doctor.

- Strictly follow the dietary advice given by your care provider.

- If you have been started on insulin, learn the correct technique for its use.

- Visit the doctor regularly for monitoring of the blood glucose level and development of complications.

- Know the symptoms of and necessary precautions that should be taken to avoid a low blood sugar level (hypoglycaemia) from your physician.
Don’t Break Your Heart
Even 30 minutes of moderate activity each day can reduce YOUR risk of heart disease by 30%

World Health Organization
Regional Office for South-East Asia
Coronary artery disease

What is Coronary Artery Disease?

- **Coronary artery disease (CAD)** is a condition in which the blood supply to the heart is decreased as compared to its needs. It is also known as ischaemic heart disease, and is responsible for causing a heart attack.

- It is usually caused by blockage of the vessels (coronary arteries) supplying blood and oxygen to the heart muscle.

- Symptoms include the following:
  — Chest pain (angina), especially on the left side
  — Pain may sometimes be referred to the left arm, neck or upper abdomen
  — Patients with coronary artery disease may not experience pain and instead may have difficulty in breathing, nausea or fainting episodes.

- Usually these symptoms subside when the patient stops exerting (like walking). However, if the chest pain begins while at rest
or continues even after adequate rest, it might be a sign of a heart attack (acute myocardial infarction).

- Risk factors for developing CAD include tobacco smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus, raised cholesterol (fat) levels in the blood, being overweight and having a sedentary lifestyle.

- An electrocardiogram (ECG) may reveal abnormalities. Some additional tests such as exercise ECG, coronary angiography and scans may be required to confirm blockage in the arteries.

- Medications can control the symptoms and prevent further damage to the heart. Some patients require opening of the blocked blood vessels by the use of small balloons (angioplasty) or surgery (coronary artery bypass grafting).

- Regular monitoring and check-ups are required for adequate treatment and prevention of complications.
How you can prevent and manage Coronary artery disease

• Modify your lifestyle:
  – Maintain your body weight with a balanced diet.
  – Exercise regularly
  – Stop smoking.
  – Avoid mental stress.
  – Reduce the intake of fats in the diet.

• Consult your doctor early to undergo evaluation for risk factors and a detailed check-up if any risk factors develop.

• Your doctor will treat risk factors by the following means:
  – Use of lipid-lowering drugs
  – Use of drugs to maintain a normal blood pressure
  – Advice regarding diet in consultation with your doctor/dietician.

• Take the daily medications regularly – they will not be useful otherwise. Carry your essential medicines wherever you go.

• Learn from your doctor about the side-effects of your medications and the precautions that need to be taken.

• Have periodic check-ups and consultations with the doctor.
Move a little

Lose a little

Live a little longer
**What is Hypertension?**

- **Hypertension** or **high blood pressure (BP)** is a condition in which the pressure in the vessels that carry blood is high.\(^2\) This causes damage to the blood vessels and increases the chances of their getting blocked.

- Most patients develop high BP with increasing age. Some others, especially those who develop it early, may have other conditions such as kidney diseases, hormonal disturbances or are on long-term medications such as steroids.

- Hypertension that develops at a young age may have a correctable underlying cause.

- **Symptoms**
  — Most patients do not develop any symptom due to high BP and therefore hypertension is also known as a “silent killer”.

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\(^2\) High blood pressure is defined as systolic BP of 140 mmHg or higher and/or diastolic BP of 90 mmHg or higher or the use of medications to lower the blood pressure.
— When the BP is very high, symptoms such as headache, bleeding from the nose or dizziness may develop.
— As a result of high BP for many years, symptoms of complications such as heart or kidney diseases or paralysis may develop.

• There is a higher risk of developing high BP if any of your family members suffers from it. In addition, reduced physical activity, weight gain, increased blood cholesterol, smoking or having diabetes mellitus increase the risk of developing hypertension.

• A number of medicines are available for controlling the BP and your doctor can select those that best suit your requirements.

• Taking these medicines regularly is necessary to avoid the long-term ill-effects of hypertension.
How you can prevent and manage hypertension

- Modify your lifestyle:
  - Maintain your body weight with a balanced diet.
  - Restrict salt in your diet and have plenty of fruits, vegetables and low-fat milk products.
  - Exercise regularly (brisk walking, running, swimming for at least 30 minutes each day for a minimum of five days a week).
  - Stop smoking.

- Consult a doctor early. It is necessary to have a complete physical examination and relevant investigations. Most often, no abnormalities are detected except a high BP and this is known as essential hypertension.

- Take the daily medications regularly – they will not be useful otherwise.

- Get your BP checked regularly and visit the doctor as directed so that the doctor can adjust the dose of your medicines according to the BP reading.

- Do not stop the medicines by yourself.

- Consult your doctor if you have any side-effect from the medicines.
Tobacco kills. Don’t smoke it. Don’t chew it.
What is Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease?

- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a condition in which the small branches of the windpipe along with the lungs are permanently damaged (most often due to smoking), leading to difficulty in breathing. Unlike in asthma, medicines cannot completely reverse the disease process in COPD.

- COPD is caused by smoke. Tobacco smoking (cigarettes or other forms) is the most common cause of this disease. Use of a traditional stove (chulha, which uses cowdung or wood for cooking) or air pollution can also lead to COPD.

- Symptoms include the following:
  — Increasing shortness of breath. Initially, breathlessness develops only on exertion, but later may occur even at rest.
  — Cough with production of sputum
  — Patients experience severe aggravation of symptoms at periodic intervals, usually
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease during the winter months and during infections.

- Smoking is the most important risk factor for developing COPD. Patients benefit even if smoking is stopped after developing the disease, hence all efforts should be directed at quitting smoking.

- Medications can control the symptoms and need to be taken regularly as advised by the doctor. Immediate medical attention should be sought in case the symptoms remain uncontrolled as the patient may need hospitalization for treatment.

- Regular monitoring and check-ups are required for adequate treatment and prevention of complications.
How you can prevent and manage COPD

• Avoid smoking. Diseases caused by smoking are usually fatal.

• Those who smoke should quit smoking immediately. Ask your doctor for ways to help you stop smoking, but your will is the most important.

• Cooking with traditional chulhas should be replaced by other modes of cooking.

• Avoid air pollution. Wear appropriate masks when working in polluted areas.

• Patients with COPD should consult the doctor immediately at the first sign of worsening of disease. Early treatment will prevent complications.

• Medications should be taken regularly. Oxygen therapy is useful only if used as advised.

• Ask your doctor for vaccinations to prevent serious infections as these may worsen the disease and prove to be fatal.
A diet of excess salty, sugary and processed foods increases the risk of cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

Eat a little better and YOU will feel a lot better.
What is high cholesterol level?

- **Cholesterol** and triglycerides are fatty substances (lipids) that can be deposited in the blood vessels and block them. Raised cholesterol is a fasting blood cholesterol level of 5.0 mmol/L or 190 mg/dL or higher.

- Cholesterol can be of the “good” type (high-density lipoprotein [HDL]-cholesterol) or “bad” type (low-density lipoprotein [LDL]-cholesterol). LDL-cholesterol is the type that causes harm to the body.

- Lipids increase in the blood of patients with excessive body weight (obesity), diabetes, regular alcohol intake, liver or kidney diseases and thyroid disease. Consumption of some medicines such as contraceptive pills, steroids and beta-blockers also lead to an increase of lipids in the blood.

- Eating food with a high fat content and a sedentary lifestyle contribute to increased
body fats. Smoking decreases the “good” cholesterol.

• Some patients have genetic diseases that cause improper processing of body fats (hyperlipoproteinaemias) resulting in their accumulation. Such patients develop high lipid levels at an earlier age and their family members often have a similar history.

• High cholesterol can cause diseases of the heart (coronary artery disease), high BP, stroke (brain attack or paralysis) and pancreatitis.

• A change in lifestyle accompanied by medications advised by your doctor can help to lower the level of blood lipids and hence avoid further risk of developing life-threatening diseases.
How you can prevent and manage High cholesterol level

• Modify your lifestyle:
  - Maintain your body weight with a balanced diet.
  - Have plenty of fruits, vegetables and low-fat milk products. Use unsaturated oil for cooking. Non-vegetarians should avoid red meat (e.g. goat or lamb meat) and instead should take white meat (e.g. poultry, fish).
  - Exercise regularly (brisk walking, running, swimming for at least 30 minutes each day for a minimum of five days a week).
  - Stop smoking and avoid excessive alcohol consumption.

• Various medicines are available to treat high cholesterol levels, depending on the exact nature of your lipid disorder (increased bad cholesterol or low good cholesterol).

• Take the daily medications regularly – they will not be useful otherwise.

• Get your lipid levels checked regularly.

• Consult your doctor if you have any side-effect from the medicines.
Do not put up with second hand smoke

Tell him to put out the cigarette

Second hand smoke kills
Asthma

What is Asthma?

- **Asthma** is a chronic disease characterized by recurrent attacks of breathlessness and wheezing. During an asthma attack, the lining of the bronchial tubes gets swollen, causing the airways to narrow and reducing the flow of air into and out of the lungs.

- Asthmatics have a tendency to develop allergy on exposure to various substances such as dust, certain food items, pollen grain dust, exercise, cold air, fumes (sulfur dioxide), wall paints, stress and other triggers. Some viral infections and smoking can also aggravate symptoms in sensitive individuals.

- Symptoms include the following:
  - Episodic, severe and sudden onset of shortness of breath that is associated with wheezing (characteristic sound produced due to laboured breathing)
  - Cough with or without sputum production
  - Symptoms are usually severe during the
night and the patient may wake up in the early morning hours due to “difficulty in filling the lungs with air”.

— Severe episodes may be associated with indrawing of the chest wall between the ribs, bluish discolouration of the lips and drowsiness. These symptoms (status asthmaticus) require immediate medical attention and hospitalization.

• Each patient has a unique set of allergic triggers that lead to symptoms of asthma. The patient is normal between the episodes of asthma.

• The cause of the patient’s allergy may sometimes be looked for with help of skin testing for known allergens, though these are often difficult to identify. If identified, avoiding the allergen will prevent further attacks of asthma.

• Medications are given to treat an acute attack of asthma. In severe cases, medications are needed to prevent further attacks.
How you can prevent and manage Asthma

- If you are asthmatic, try to identify the trigger for your symptoms and avoid it.

- Avoid exposure to dust, mould, strong odours, paints, irritating fumes, sprays and certain food items.

- Avoid keeping pets like cats, as they can be a source of dander that triggers asthma.

- Do not smoke and avoid passive smoking.

- Take special care during sudden changes in weather by avoiding exposure.

- Ensure that you carry your medications wherever you travel.

- If your symptoms are severe or not adequately controlled by medications, immediately visit your doctor.
Get fit, not fat
Run, Play, Swim, Cycle...
**Stroke**

**What is Stroke?**

- *Stroke* is a sudden development of weakness (e.g. paralysis), which is caused by a disturbance in blood supply to a specific part of the brain, either due to obstruction of a blood vessel or leakage.

- Ischaemic stroke is caused by an obstruction in the vessel wall, often due to blood clots. Most commonly, these clots arise due to rhythm disturbances in the heart (e.g. atrial fibrillation).

- Leakage from the vessel produces blood clots and swelling in the brain, which compress vital areas of the brain.

- High BP, disturbances in heart rhythm, high fat levels in the blood and diabetes mellitus are diseases that increase the risk of ischaemic stroke. Smoking is also a very important risk factor for stroke.

- Uncontrolled high BP can produce rupture of the brain vessels. Other risk factors for haemorrhagic stroke are head injury, use of medicines that decrease the normal clotting tendency of blood.
(anticoagulants) and structural deformity of the blood vessels in the brain (aneurysms).

- As the different parts of the brain control different body parts, the specific symptoms depend on the part of the brain that is affected. Common symptoms are
  — Sudden and severe “bursting” headache
  — Sudden development of weakness or inability to move a particular body part (e.g. arm or leg) or an entire side (e.g. entire left or right side of the body)
  — Deviation of the face to one side
  — Inability to speak
  — Loss of control over urination or passage of stools.

- Stroke is a medical emergency. The patient should be immediately shifted to a hospital and treatment started as soon as possible.

- Recovery from stroke is slow and the patient needs to be taken care of during this time to avoid development of complications such as infections (pneumonia) and bedsores.

- Adequate attention should also be given to the patient’s nutrition during the recovery period.
How you can prevent and manage Stroke

- Modify your lifestyle:
  - Exercise regularly.
  - Stop smoking.

- Get yourself checked for high BP, diabetes, high cholesterol and heart problems. If you have any of these, take your medicines regularly.

- Caregivers should learn from the doctor how to take proper care of the patient with stroke. They should also learn to recognize the danger signs that require immediate medical attention (e.g. laboured breathing).
Think before YOU drink

Harmful use of Alcohol kills 500,000 people each year

Alcohol causes serious harm. Avoid it.

World Health Organization
Regional Office for South-East Asia
WHAT ARE THE COMMON CANCERS AMONG MEN?

- **Common cancers among men** are those of the oral cavity (mouth), lung, prostate, stomach and intestinal tract, and skin. Leukoplakia of the mouth is a precancerous condition.

- The risk for developing most of these cancers increases with age.

- Tobacco smoking is the most important risk factor for development of cancer. Lung cancer develops commonly among smokers. The risk of developing other cancers such as those of the throat (larynx), oesophagus, kidney, urinary bladder, pancreas and stomach also increases with smoking.

- Tobacco chewing is equally harmful and is a leading cause of mouth (oral cavity) cancers. Exposure to smoke from outdoor as well as indoor air pollution, industries or passive smoking is also risky.

- Unhealthy eating habits such as taking foods high in fat increase the risk of developing various cancers.
• Meet your doctor if you develop any symptom such as
  — Ulcer or small growth in the mouth
  — Glands in the neck
  — Coughing out of blood
  — Frequent changes in bowel habits
  — Severe loss of appetite and weight.

• Early screening for any cancer helps in early detection and better treatment.
How you can prevent and manage Cancers among men

- Stop smoking and tobacco chewing. Not only will it help avert cancer but also decrease the risk of developing other diseases.
- Maintain an ideal body weight with a balanced diet.
- Have plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Exercise regularly to keep fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Avoiding these risk factors by adopting a healthy lifestyle will reduce your chances of developing cancer as well as other diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, high BP and chronic respiratory diseases.
- Get yourself checked if you have any suspicious symptom or a family history of cancer.
- Use appropriate precautions if your work exposes you to radiation or industrial toxins.
- Undergo periodic mouth check-ups for follow up of leukoplakia.
- Get vaccinated against hepatitis B in consultation with your doctor.
Do not experiment with tobacco. Tobacco is addictive.
Cancers among women

What are the common cancers among women?

- **Common cancers among women** are those of the breast, cervix and uterus, lung and gastrointestinal tract.

- The risk of developing most of these cancers increases with age.

- Persons with a history of breast or other cancers among family members have an increased risk of developing cancer themselves. Such persons need to undergo regular screening tests.

- Cervical cancer is caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). Unsafe sexual practices can increase the risk of cervical cancer as well as the risk of acquiring sexually transmitted infections (such as HIV).

- Smoking is the most important risk factor for developing cancer, especially lung cancer.

- Unhealthy eating habits such as a high intake of fatty foods increase the risk of developing various cancers.
• Meet your doctor if you develop any symptom such as
  o A lump in the breast
  o Abnormal coloured discharge from the nipples
  o Irregular menstrual periods or irregular bleeding
  o Coughing out of blood
  o Severe weight loss.

• Avoiding risk factors by adopting a healthy lifestyle will reduce your chances of developing a cancer.

• Regular and early screening for any cancer helps in early detection and better treatment.
How you can prevent and manage Cancers among women

- Learn and practise the technique of breast self-examination for early detection of a breast lump. Consult your doctor for advice on mammography.
- Regular “Pap smear” testing from the age of 20 years will help in early detection of cervical cancer.
- Stop smoking and tobacco chewing. Not only will it help avert cancer but also decrease the risk of developing other diseases.
- Maintain an ideal body weight with a balanced diet.
- Have plenty of fruits, vegetables and low-fat milk products.
- Exercise regularly to keep fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Get yourself checked if you have any suspicious symptom or a family history of cancer.
- Get vaccinated against hepatitis B and HPV, in consultation with your doctor.
Say no to junk food

Instead eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables every day
What is childhood obesity?

- **Overweight and obesity*** among children*** is a growing public health problem in most cities.

- Some genetic diseases or hormonal disturbances can present with obesity in children and hence an obese child should be taken to a doctor for evaluation and early treatment. Obesity among children may result in high BP, heart diseases at a younger age, diabetes, gallstones and liver diseases, breathing disorders and psychological disorders.

- A low body weight at birth and inadequate duration of breastfeeding increase the risk of obesity during childhood and in later life.

- Changing social habits such as frequent eating at fast-food outlets, consumption of oversized portions at home, consumption of high-calorie, high-fat, low-fibre foods and intake of sweetened beverages contribute to the development of obesity.

- Excessive use of computers, excessive watching of television, lack of regular exercise and other sedentary lifestyle habits also lead to obesity among children in cities.

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*Overweight is defined as a body mass index (BMI) of ≥25 kg/m². Obesity is defined as a body mass index (BMI) of ≥30 kg/m²*
Obesity among children

• Prevention is the best management for this growing problem:
  – Limit the intake of sugar-sweetened beverages.
  – Remove the television and computers from primary sleeping areas.
  – Make sure that the child has breakfast regularly.
  – Limit eating out, especially at fast-food outlets, encourage family meals and limit portion sizes.
  – Encourage the intake of diets containing fruits and vegetables.
  – Ensure the intake of a balanced diet rich in calcium and fibre.
  – Initiate and maintain breastfeeding for the prescribed duration.
  – Encourage regular exercise and outdoor games.

How you can prevent and manage obesity among children
• Management of childhood obesity requires efforts from the parents as well as a change in lifestyle. Changing the child’s food habits and acquiring healthy habits such as being physically active help to attain and maintain a normal body weight.

• Management of childhood obesity includes changes in the entire family’s lifestyle.
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NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES ARE PREVENTABLE AND TREATABLE.

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), such as cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases are the leading causes of death worldwide.

Four modifiable risk factors are largely responsible for these diseases – tobacco use, unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity and harmful use of alcohol.

NCDs can be prevented and treated by maintaining a healthy lifestyle and undergoing periodic screening.

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