

Good roads are essential for good health

Bad roads and traffic woes take a toll on our physical and emotional well-being, say experts

By A Staff Reporter



Dr. Paresh Lakdawala, Psychiatrist, Bhatia Hospital, Mumbai

In view with the Road Safety Week which was marked from 11 to 17 January to create awareness about the importance of road safety, Afternoon DC spoke to a few doctors from the city who talked about road safety with respect to Mumbai. Long distance travelling for long hours takes a toll on the health, physically and psychologically.

Talking about the emotional and psychological impact of being stuck in traffic for hours, Dr. P D Lakdawala, Psychiatrist at Bhatia Hospital, Mumbai elaborates on the emotional and psychological impact of being stuck in traffic for long hours said, "When one has to travel in a crowded train or bus or even in one's own vehicle and gets stuck in tremendous traffic jams on the road, it is bound to lead to anxiety and fearful anticipation in a person. There is the pressure of catching a train at a particular time. People have so many things to think about like, 'will I get a place to sit in the train?' Or 'How much traffic will be there?' And 'Will I be able to reach office on time?' When they finally reach work, they are already tired and exhausted even though their work is yet to begin." He also added that the employees take a lot of time to actually get into work mode and this kind of experience right at the beginning of the day creates a lot of stress and conflict. "People then complain of headaches, pains, indigestion which can be the result of the person being stressed due to the travel. In the early 80s and 90s, when people had moved from the old Mumbai city to far-off suburbs in search of bigger houses to accommodate growing families, many middle-aged men would complain of stress and anxiety. Back then, we used to call it the 'suburban syndrome'."

He also added that the condition of roads or traffic which impact the time that they spend with family and hampers work performance. "Without any quality time to



Dr. Sambhav Shah, Spine Surgeon, Bhatia Hospital, Mumbai

spend with family, it leads to a lot of stress and anxiety situations which can cause psychosomatic problems. Dr Lakdawala also said that the groups formed while travelling in trains is a way to escape from the routine mundane life.

Dr. Sambhav Shah, a spine surgeon, spoke about the physical impact of road safety and said, "Driving for long hours is not so much a cause for the back getting affected. The real culprit is the bad posture that we sit in. A lot of people have the habit of keeping their car seats behind or the backrest completely slanted and their arms are outstretched. The ideal sitting position is where your back and hips are at 90 degrees and your knees and



thighs are 45 to 90 degrees. Any time you are slouching in the car, your back is not in the correct posture and if you drive in that position for longer hours, you are likely to develop back pain. What can cause real trouble is your back muscles which go into spasm because of the wrong postures. Also the joints of your spine are under undue stress because of the bad positions. Over time, if there is repeated stress on these joints it will lead to arthritis of these joints and exacerbate the situation."

In addition to driving he also said that standing for longer hours in local trains can also lead to physical problems. He said, "Standing in the same position for a long time can cause your body to get locked and getting out of that position can cause some discomfort. Similarly standing in local trains for long hours with one hand holding onto something for balance, can cause problems. But the body of a person who exercises regularly and is fit enough can take this. However, people who do not exercise regularly and are on the heavier side have a higher chance of being in pain because their muscles are already weak. For people who have to travel long distances in local trains daily, it is advisable that they indulge in some kind of exercise regularly and train the body. Many people also have the habit of standing with their luggage like their laptop bag etc on one shoulder. This should be avoided and they should instead try to put the bag away in a safe place. Also, the key is to try and stretch in whatever little way possible."

"Bad roads also lead to bad health as a road with potholes that cause minor jerks is enough to cause chronic pain," opines Dr Shah. He also talked about why a helmet is important while driving two wheelers in

Mumbai. He says, "Many people tend to develop neck pain because of wearing helmets. This is why choosing the right kind of helmet is very important because wrong ones can lead to neck pains. Also, it is extremely important that if a biker meets with an accident on the road, people should not try to remove his helmet because the way they try to remove the helmet can actually worsen the situation, especially if it is a fracture. It is advisable to let a doctor do it. The patient should be left as is. An ambulance should be called and the paramedics should help the patient. Onlookers should definitely not try to remove the helmet."

Abhishek Subhash, General Physician from a Mumbai hospital says, "Outdoor air pollution has a lot of suspended particulate matter (SPM). It essentially causes several lung disorders among people. The carbon monoxide and other gases combined with cigarette smoke and other particulate matters can trigger asthma and related asthmatic disorders in people who are prone for it. Prolonged exposure to pollution also triggers other lung disorders which are collectively called chronic obstructive pulmonary disorders (COPD) among people who may not be prone to it but are exposed to pollution for a very long time. Apart from this, a lot of pollution gives rise to other disorders like irritation in eyes, flu like symptoms."

Dr. Abhishek Subhash, General Physician, Bhatia Hospital, Mumbai



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How important is road safety with respect to Mumbai?
It is very important to follow safety rules, wear a helmet and seat belts and ensure that you do not cross speed limits. In India, where people tend to suddenly cross roads, you may be in danger even if it is not your fault. Do not talk on mobiles at all and be aware all the time. Try not to get distracted and if possible take breaks in long journeys.



Cops brief citizens on tackling cyber crimes

By Suresh Golani

As a part of the Maharashtra Government's 'Transforming Maharashtra' program, the Local Crime Branch (LCB) unit of the Thane (rural) police organised a Cyber Crime Awareness Seminar at the Zaika Hall in Bhayandar (W) on Monday. Prominent banking experts including assistant vice president of Axis Bank Nishikant Upadhyay and



senior police personnel—Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Prashant Kadam and ASP Atul Kulkarni—expressed their views and threw light on various aspects of cyber crimes including bullying, hacking, phishing, data theft, cryptography, software piracy and stalking.

Apart from explaining legalities and spelling out the 'do's and don'ts' to prevent being victims of cyber related offenses, the speakers also

replied to the queries posed by participants. "Today is the age of digital transactions and almost everyone is the part of social media. Therefore, our department is conducting awareness and seminars along with banking experts," said Prashant Kadam, who presided over the event which was attended by Senior Police Inspector (LCB) Vyenkat Andhale and senior police officials of the Mira Road division.