

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Delhi seeks preventive care

## Preventive Check-Up Cases Go Up By 100% In City Hospitals

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**New Delhi:** Prevention, they say, is better than cure. And it's the mantra more and more Indians have seriously started to follow.

Most hospitals in Delhi are now recording a tremendous increase, even to the tune of 100%, in the number of people undergoing preventive health check-ups. And it's not just over-stressed corporate executives who make up these numbers.

Hospital records actually show more walk-in middle class patients, who are increasingly becoming aware of the benefits of good health. Also, the trend isn't prevalent only in private hospitals.

Even the health and family welfare ministry is waking up to the benefits of a preventive health check up. Speaking to *Times City*, health and family welfare minister A Ramadoss said he had decided to make it mandatory for all CGHS beneficiaries (35 lakh) to undergo a preventive health screening once a year, from 2009.

Meanwhile, in an effort to confirm the trend, *Times City* dug into the Preventive Health Programme (PHP) records of some of Delhi's biggest hospitals. The number of patients who underwent a PHP at Max Hospital rose from 7,100 in 2006 to nearly 8,600 in 2007. Apollo Hospital saw nearly 22,000 people undergoing preventive health check-up in 2007 compared to 19,943 in 2006.

In Moolchand Hospital, 20 people underwent a preventive



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check-up every day in 2007 compared to 12 per day in 2006. In fact, this year, till August, the hospital saw 40 patients take appointments for PHPs every day. Escorts Heart Institute and Research Centre recorded 10,900 PHP entries in 2007 against 9,500 in 2006 and 8,500 in 2005. Around 3,500 people underwent a preventive health screening at Fortis Hospital (Vasant Kunj) in 2007 compared to 1,586 in 2006.

Fortis Hospital in Noida saw doubling of its numbers — while 2,519 people enrolled for a PHP in 2006, the number stood at 5,415 at the end of 2007. The records at Sir Gangaram Hospital also show an increase — 1,700 in 2007 compared to 1,110 in 2006.

In fact, such increase in

PHP enrolments has made Max Hospital launch a PHP package, that costs a whopping Rs 70,000. An average PHP costs anywhere between Rs 1,500 and Rs 8,000.

Dr Sushum Sharma, PHP in-charge at Max, said the Platinum PHP costing Rs 70,000 would be the most exhaustive medical assessment available in India. "It is highly customised. Besides looking at renal and liver functions and a comprehensive set of blood tests, we will screen people for infections, dental, ophthalmological and gynaecological health. You will undergo ECG, whole body MRIs, scans, X-rays, ultrasounds and check against various cancer markers. Your body will be screened from head to toe, without ex-

posing you to any radiation," Dr Sharma said.

According to Dr SC Manchanda, cardiologist and PHP in charge at Gangaram Hospital, in 2006, 25% of those who enrolled for a PHP were around 30 years of age. Now, it is over 40%.

"Early detection not only increases chances of cure but is also financially beneficial. I have seen that of those who undergo a PHP, 40% suffer from high BP without knowing it, 10% suffer from diabetes, 70% suffer from psychological stress and 50% have high metabolic syndrome. Interestingly, 90% of these people feel and look healthy," Dr Manchanda said.

Dr Anupam Sibal, group medical director of Apollo Hospital, added, "With increased financial prosperity, more Indians are concerned about their health. PHPs are, therefore, no more just heart check-ups but exhaustive examination of the whole body. Packages are being tailored for executives, housewives, children and the elderly."

Ramadoss said, "Due to increased economic progress, healthy lifestyle and balanced diet have taken a severe beating. Not just physically, people are emotionally strained. Sedentary lifestyle is an added vice. Therefore, every Indian, above the age of 30, should get their preventive health check-up done annually. The cost of treating the illness will be much more than preventing it."

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