

The Age

According to a new British research, binge drinking during weekends or holidays can increase the risk of heart attacks in middle-aged men

HOLIDAY CAN PUT HEART AT RISK

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Have you planned a weekend party? And, do you want to binge on alcohol after a gap of many days? If you have such plans then think again. The "weekend-heart syndrome" can affect you. A recent study by British researchers reveals that heavy weekend drinking sessions are linked with double the rate of heart attacks in middle-aged men.

Since it's a British research and very new, cardiac experts in India don't completely agree with the findings.

Keeping in mind, the social factors prevailing in India, cardiologists say that since we don't have any particular "weekend con-

cept", so rather than terming it as a "weekend-heart syndrome", it would be appropriate to call it "holiday-heart syndrome". There is a wide chance of people being prone to strokes during vacations, when they are on a long break and not doing much.

Dr Purshotam Lal, chief cardiologist, Metro Heart Institute, Noida says, "Ideally, when people work under pressure, they should take a holiday and relax. This helps control the blood pressure and rejuvenates the system. But since during vacations people indulge in activities that give them an overdose of pleasure, it may lead to the secretion of catecholamines that could cause a stroke."

According to Dr Lal, people indulging in any activity that excites them too much after a long gap could lead to a stroke. They think that after a gap, if a person's intake of alcohol is too much it can cause "irregular heart rate".

An extreme of anything like alcohol, excitement or anxiety after a certain gap can lead to 'atrial fibrillation' or irregular blood flow in the heart chambers.

DR RAJNEESH KAPOOR
senior cardiologist
Apollo Hospital

"An extreme of anything like alcohol, excitement or anxiety after a gap can lead to 'atrial fibrillation' or irregular blood flow in the heart chambers that ultimately leads to the formation of clot and results in a stroke," says Dr Rajneesh Kapoor, senior cardiologist, Apollo Hospital.

Even Dr Anil Dhal, senior consultant cardiologist at Max Devki Devi Hospital says that atrial fibrillation is one of the major causes of a stroke. "Following an abnormal routine may lead to a stroke as it disturbs the movement of blood," he says.

Explaining the holiday syndrome in an easier way, Dr Kapoor gives an example of a guy who was busy with his work all day long. After work he goes home and starts watching the T-20 cricket series. He gets over-excited and finally suffers from a stroke.

"Even things like having sex after a long time or extreme grief can be causes of a stroke," says Dr Lal.

He adds that in these cases the brain starts working overtime and the BP rises.

"The fluctuation of the BP finally leads to a heart attack," he says. However, cardiologists confirm that people who have heart problems, have higher chances of getting a stroke because of the holiday-heart syndrome.

