

*Dr Hansa Gupta, Consultant Cardiologist with Paras Hospitals has a startling revelation to make, "In my professional career as a cardiologist, I have come across patients (well-educated) who have left their medicines to manage hypertension, lower cholesterol on their own, even after an angioplasty. These patients have gone on alternate therapies and have left the conventional treatment cold turkey, many a time fearing that they will become addicted to the medicines. Naturally, I have met such patients in emergency rooms."*

# 7 health mistakes smart men and women make

Educated and well-intentioned patients too commit health mistakes that hamper their pursuit of recovery and good health. *Archana Darshan* talks to experts...

## 1 SEEK ADVICE BEFORE YOU QUIT PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES.

"I have many patients who have BP medicines intermittently. They quit it when they feel okay and have it only when they are feeling unnecessary anger or heaviness in the head," shares Dr Gupta. The thumb rule for antihypertensive medicines is that a patient has to take it for life. If you have overhauled your lifestyle completely, then too you can't quit medicines on your own. Schedule an appointment with your doctor who will advise you on your next step. Quitting medicines on your own is fraught with health risks like stroke and heart attack, warns Dr Gupta. The best time to take your medicines is early morning, adds Dr Gupta.

## 2 START TO FINISH.

Antibiotics are not meant to be left half way. You got to complete the course of medicines, says Dr Sushila Kataria, Internal Consultant with Paras. But, there are patients who leave antibiotics once they start feeling better, says Dr Kataria. This is more common with tuberculosis patients who have to take antibiotics for a longer period. By doing this such patients increase chances of relapse. Antibiotics work against bacterial infections and if you don't complete the course of medicine prescribed by your doctor, it's not able to clear up the infection completely, as a result the remaining bacteria grows resistant to the antibiotics, and the next time when you fall ill, you need stronger antibiotics for the same ailment.

## 3 WHEN IN DOUBT LEAVE IT OUT.

This rule applies when you're buying medicines. Insist on bills

and do check the expiry dates of the medicines of each strip of medicine that you've bought.

## 4 EMERGENCIES DON'T HAPPEN EVERY OTHER DAY.

That's what happening with emergency contraceptive pills these days. "The advertisements are misleading too," points out Dr Kaushiki Dwivedi, Consultant Gynaecologist with Max. "I have come across couples who're using these pills as an alternative to contraceptive, which is very wrong," says Dr Dwivedi. These pills are to be used in cases of extreme emergency, like condom failure and the pills do not provide any protection against sexually transmitted diseases, which only condoms offer. In one cycle, you can use it only once. Overuse of these pills increases incidences of ectopic pregnancy, where fertilised egg gets transplanted in the fallopian tubes instead of uterus. Your periods also become irregular.

## 5 MEASURE THE MEDICINE.

"Yes, it's very important to do before you give the medicine to your child," says Dr Shekhar Vashishth,

**Dr Dwivedi says, "Intra-uterine devices are better emergency contraceptives than the pills. They can be used up to five days of unprotected intercourse and once implanted they provide contraception advantages."**

Consultant Paediatrician with Moolchand Medcity. Many educated parents use kitchen spoons to give medicine to their child, though all drug companies give measuring caps with the medicine bottle. "If you don't give

the right dose of the medicine, it just won't work and if you overdose on the medicine, it leads to harmful effects," cautions Dr Vashishth.

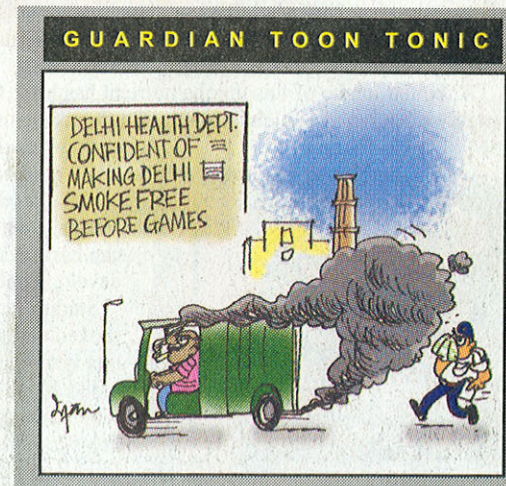
## 6 FOLLOW UP

Follow ups are important, particularly if your doctor has asked for it. If you're suffering from lifestyle diseases like cholesterol disorder and hypertension, make it a point to visit your doctor with your latest reports once a year, at least. So, is the case with pap smear.

## 7 USE INTERNET WITH CAUTION.

Dr Kataria says, "These days I get many patients who before coming to me have done a quick search on their symptoms."

there is so much information at disposal and it's good in a way and patient learns about his condition on Internet, but one should always remember that Internet is not a substitute for medical advice."



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