

## Lifestyle Disorder Management in Women

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### Abstract

Women have immense responsibility to shoulder as home makers, technical and industrial advancements on one side have made life easy which on the other side, the role of women has also changed considerably. It is not only that the functions of the family change with general social changes, but the roles of various members within the family also change. Family life today is no more the same as it used to be. Homemaker's responsibilities have changed considerably with time. The efficient management and running of the home today, needs specialized knowledge, side experience and new types of skills. The home-maker also needs knowledge to use new kinds of materials and equipment most advantageously, women play a dynamic role in their home activities-as wives; as mothers responsible for the development and welfare of their children and as able homemakers in charge of the operation of their homes. In recent times, with the increase in educational facilities and widespread changes, women have also taken employment outside the home! They have very well added a major vital role today – that of a wage earner!! All is well when everything is well!!! But, there crops in the other side of the coin. Behind the whole process as mentioned above, there lies a lot of hard work, care, safety, love, pleasure, devotion and none the less – STRESS! This is the SILENT KILLER. It carries innumerable disorders along with it. They range from acute to chronic stress. Some of the lifestyle disorders most common in women are anemia, obesity, diabetes, blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases, liver disorders, kidney problems and CANCER!! Thus management of all the multifaceted role of a woman is no joke. So the woman's family plays a prime vital role for eliminating such heavy stress by proper understanding and not undermining the work but rather sharing the same. Hence, sharing work at least at home is better than daring any of the lifestyle disorders!

### INTRODUCTION:

Historically, the role of women was confined to some extent to being a mother and wife, with women being expected to dedicate most of their energy to these roles, and to spend most of their time taking care of the home. In many cultures, women received significant help in performing these tasks from older female relatives, such as mothers in law or their own mothers. Mothers have historically fulfilled the primary role in raising children, but since the late 20th century, the role of the father in child care has been given greater prominence and social acceptance in some Western countries. The 20th century also saw more and more women entering paid work. Homemaking is the management of a home, otherwise known as housework, housekeeping, or household management. It is the act of overseeing the organizational, day-to-day operations of a house or estate, and the managing of other domestic concerns. This work is described by economists as "household production". A person in charge of the homemaking, who is not employed outside the home, is often called a homemaker, a gender-specific term for a housewife in

India. Because it has been the traditional job of a woman to be a *homemaker*, a woman who spends most of her time caring for the family home has been called a "housewife". Other terms that started being used in the late 1900s are "house goddess", "home professional" and "home and family facilitator". A homemaker is a person whose main job is to take care of his or her own family, home and children. Traditionally, the job of homemaker is done by women and the job of provider is done by men, but both men and women can be providers and homemakers. Home maintenance involves the diagnosis and resolution of problems in a home, and is related to home maintenance to avoid such problems. Home management is defined as utilization of human and physical resources for the purpose of maximizing individual and familial development within the home. It is the process of efficiently and effectively running a household. A homemaker is a person whose main job is to take care of his or her own family, home and children. Traditionally, the job of homemaker is done by women and the job of provider is done by men, but both men and women can be providers and homemakers.

An urban society is when most people live in towns and cities. In urban societies, since ancient times, most men did work that earned money. They worked in workshops, trading, banks and other businesses as well as in churches, schools and the town council. It was seen as the job of a woman to be a "housewife" (homemaker). Often, if a family had a business, then not just the husband but also the wife would work to make money in the business. This has been happening since ancient times. In many urban societies, there have been few jobs that a woman was allowed to do. In modern society there are still strong traditions about the jobs that women should do. In the 19th century (1801-1900) more and more women began to stop being homemakers and began to do jobs that men usually did. By the 1960s in western countries there was still an idea that it was all right for a woman to work and be a "career girl" (which was what they called a young woman with a well-paying job) until the woman got married, when she should stop work and be a "housewife" (homemaker). Some jobs like teaching were only done by unmarried women. Many women in the 1980s believed that this was not treating men and women equally and that women should do whatever job they were able to do, whether they were married or not. At this time, when more and more women had good educations and were able to earn a lot of money, in some families (usually if there were young children to care for) the husband would be the person that was the homemaker. In the late 20th century, it became harder and harder for a family to live on the wage of a man who has just an ordinary job. Many women who are mothers cannot stay at home and make homemaking their first job. Nowadays, in many families where both the husband and wife do paid work, both partners share in the "housework" and caring for the children. In other families, there is still a traditional idea that housework is only a *woman's* job, so that when a couple get home from work, it is only the wife who works in the house, while the man takes a rest after his day's work.

Empowerment refers to increasing the economic, political, social, educational, gender, or spiritual strength of individuals and communities. "Marginalized" refers to the overt or covert trends within societies whereby those perceived as lacking desirable traits or deviating from the group norms tend to be excluded by wider society and ostracized as undesirables. Equal opportunity laws which actively oppose such marginalization, allow increased empowerment to occur. They are also a symptom of minorities' and women's empowerment through lobbying. Marginalized people who lack self-sufficiency become,

at a minimum, dependent on charity, or welfare. They lose their self-confidence because they cannot be fully self-supporting. The opportunities denied them also deprive them of the pride of accomplishment which others, who have those opportunities, can develop for themselves. This in turn can lead to psychological, social and even mental health problems. Empowerment is then the process of obtaining these basic opportunities for marginalized people, either directly by those people, or through the help of non-marginalized others who share their own access to these opportunities. It also includes actively thwarting attempts to deny those opportunities. Empowerment also includes encouraging, and developing the skills for, self-sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. This process can be difficult to start and to implement effectively.

### **Work strategies**

In sociology, *household work strategy* is the division of labour between members of a household, whether implicit or the result of explicit decision-making, with the alternatives weighed up in a simplified type of cost-benefit analysis. It is a plan for the relative deployment of household members' time between the three domains of employment: in the *market economy*, including home-based self-employment second jobs, in order to obtain money to buy goods and services in the market; *domestic production work*, such as cultivating a vegetable patch or raising chickens, purely to supply food to the household; and *domestic consumption work* to provide goods and services directly within the household, such as cooking meals, child-care, household repairs, or the manufacture of clothes and gifts. Household work strategies may vary over the life-cycle, as household members age, or with the economic environment; they may be imposed by one person or be decided collectively.

### **Gender Deviance**

According to the recent research, 8 out of 10 married women do more house work than their husbands. Women today make up 40 percent of India's sole or primary breadwinners for families with children under 18, a share that has quadrupled since 1960. There is only 1 in 10 married men does an equal amount of cleaning and washing as his wife, while only 3% of married women do fewer than three hours a week. A recent, large cross-national study found that "women's housework did not decline significantly and men's house work did not increase significantly after the mid-1980s in India. The men's participation in housework topped out at 94 minutes at day in 1998, but by 2003 was down to 81 minutes, not much different than the 76 minutes it was in 1985.

Women's health is positioned within a wider body of knowledge cited by, amongst others, the World Health Organisation, which places importance on gender as a social determinant of health. Research has demonstrated significant biological differences between the sexes in rates of susceptibility, symptoms and response to treatment in many major areas of health, including heart disease and some cancers. The social view of health combined with the acknowledgement that gender is a social determinant of health inform women's health service delivery in countries around the world. But these problems can affect women differently. For example, Women are more likely to die following a heart

attack than men and women are more likely to show signs of depression and anxiety than men. The effects of sexually transmitted diseases can be more serious in women. Osteoarthritis affects more women than men. Women are more likely to have urinary tract problems.

### **Anemia in Women**

Anemia affects an estimated 400 million women worldwide, and most women are unaware of the symptoms and tend to attribute such mild symptoms to the stresses of modern life. It literally means "without blood" and refers to a condition in which the blood is deficient in red blood cells (RBC's) or the hemoglobin (iron-containing) portion of RBC's. Anemia is caused by excessive blood loss, excessive RBC destruction or deficient RBC production. There are several types, with iron deficiency anemia being the most common. Iron is an important factor because it is used to make hemoglobin. In India, more than 30% of all women of childbearing age have iron deficiency anemia. The difference is that women can lose an excessive amount of blood during menstruation. Also, not eating enough iron-rich foods or not absorbing enough iron can compound the problem. Chronic diseases that inhibit formation of new blood or cause blood loss can contribute to anemia. Examples of such diseases are peptic ulcer, bone marrow disease and bleeding hemorrhoids. If one is experiencing any of the following symptoms- pale or sallow complexion, pale lips and nailbeds, fatigue, dizziness, increased heart rate, sore or swollen tongue, shortness of breath, headache, irritability, and ringing in the ears-one may be anemic. Other causes are heart palpitations, blurry vision, insomnia, numbness of the limbs, scanty periods, delayed menstruation, or no periods. Also there could be unusual hair loss, premature graying and thin dry hair, dry skin and poor appetite.

For the treatment of anemia, iron supplements can be used. The recommended daily allowance for iron ranges from 6 mg for infants to 30 mg for pregnant women. Excessive amounts of iron can cause constipation, impair the uptake of essential trace minerals, and at worst, high levels of iron in the blood may increase the risk of a heart attack. Foods to eat that are good sources of iron for mild cases of anemia or blood deficiency are green leafy vegetables, dried beans, blackstrap molasses, dried apricots, prunes, raisins and other dried fruits, almonds, seaweeds, parsley, whole grains and yams. When anemia is severe, beef liver, lean meat, oysters, lamb or chicken can be taken. Foods high in vitamin C, such as citrus, tomatoes and strawberries or vitamin C supplements greatly enhance the absorption of iron from foods. Foods to avoid that interfere with iron absorption are tea, coffee, wheat bran, spinach, chocolate, soft drinks, beer, ice cream and candy bars. Antacids and overuse of calcium supplements also decreases iron absorption.

### **Obesity**

About one-third of Indian women 20 years of age and older are considered obese. Obesity is a complex disorder. It is caused by multiple factors, both environmental and inherited, including excessive calorie and food intake, decreased physical activity and genetic influences. We most likely gain weight because you consume more calories (energy) than your body uses or needs. Therefore, excess abdominal fat is associated with an increase in blood cholesterol and insulin resistance, which may result in diabetes. An

"apple shaped" figure may also raise your risks for other life-threatening illnesses, such as heart disease and stroke. India has become a country with a rapidly expanding population of overweight people. Today approximately 38.3 percent of Indian adults are either overweight or obese, and 23.9 percent are obese. The obesity epidemic is a rapidly growing problem in this country. In 2000, no State had an obesity prevalence of 30 percent or more. In 2009, seven States had obesity rates of 30 percent or more. And by 2010, the number of States that had obesity rates of 30 percent or more increased to 12. Obesity, defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more, is the second leading cause of preventable death in India. Health care professionals use a simple calculation called the body mass index (BMI) to determine body weight relative to height. In adults, the BMI calculation strongly correlates with total body fat content in adults. Overweight is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) between 25 and 29.9. Obesity is defined as having a BMI of 30 or more. Overweight individuals, defined as having a BMI between 25 and 29.9, are more likely to have high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol, major risk factors for heart disease and stroke. Additionally, the results of many studies suggest that excess body weight is strongly and independently associated with an increased risk of heart failure. Overweight and obesity also are major risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes. Several types of cancer are associated with being overweight, including cancer of the uterus, gallbladder, kidney, breast and colon. Other conditions linked with obesity include sleep apnea, osteoarthritis, gout, gallbladder disease and infertility. Obesity-related conditions worsen as weight increases and often improve as the excess weight is lost. Obesity is a major component of a group of metabolic risk factors known collectively as metabolic syndrome, which is defined as having at least three of the following five markers:

1. A waist measurement of more than 35 inches in women and more than 40 inches in men.
2. A fasting blood glucose level of 100 mg/dL or higher.
3. A triglyceride level at or above 150 mg/dL. Triglycerides are a form of fat in your blood.
4. An HDL cholesterol level (the "good" cholesterol) below 50 mg/dL (below 40 mg/dL in men).
5. Blood pressure at or above 130 mm Hg systolic (the top number) or 85 mm Hg diastolic (the bottom number).

## **Diabetes**

The risk of heart disease, the most common complication of diabetes, is more serious among women than men. Among people with diabetes who have had a heart attack, women have lower survival rates and a poorer quality of life than men. Women with diabetes have a shorter life expectancy than women without diabetes, and women are at greater risk of blindness from diabetes than men. Death rates for women aged 25-44 years with diabetes are more than 3 times the rate for women without diabetes. Women with diabetes must also plan childbearing carefully. It is especially important to keep blood glucose levels as near to normal as possible before and during pregnancy, to protect both mother and baby. Pregnancy itself may affect insulin levels, as well as

diabetes-related eye and kidney problems. Diabetes is a major cause of early death, heart disease, kidney disease, stroke, blindness and amputation.

## Heart Disease

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women. Although heart disease is sometimes thought of as a "man's disease," around the same number of women and men die each year of heart disease. Despite increases in awareness over the past decade, **only 54%** of women recognize that heart disease is their **number 1 killer**. Almost **two-thirds (64%)** of women who die suddenly of coronary heart disease have **no previous symptoms**. Even if you have no symptoms, you may still be at risk for heart disease. While some women have no symptoms, others experience angina (dull, heavy to sharp chest pain or discomfort), pain in the neck/jaw/throat or pain in the upper abdomen or back. These may occur during rest, begin during physical activity, or be triggered by mental stress. Women are more likely to describe chest pain that is sharp, burning and more frequently have pain in the neck, jaw, throat, abdomen or back. Sometimes heart disease may be silent and not diagnosed until a woman experiences signs or symptoms of a heart attack, heart failure, an arrhythmia, or stroke. These symptoms may include: **Heart Attack:** Chest pain or discomfort, upper back pain, indigestion, heartburn, nausea/vomiting, extreme fatigue, upper body discomfort, and shortness of breath; **Arrhythmia:** Fluttering feelings in the chest (palpitations); **Heart Failure:** Shortness of breath, fatigue, swelling of the feet/ankles/legs/abdomen; **Stroke:** Sudden weakness, paralysis (inability to move) or numbness of the face/arms/legs, especially on one side of the body. Other symptoms may include: confusion, trouble speaking or understanding speech, difficulty seeing in one or both eyes, shortness of breath, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination, loss of consciousness, or sudden and severe headache.

High blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol, and smoking are key risk factors for heart disease. About **half of Indians(49%)** have at least one of these three risk factors. Several other medical conditions and lifestyle choices can also put people at a higher risk for heart disease, including:-Diabetes, Overweight and obesity, Poor diet, Physical inactivity, Excessive alcohol use.

## Cancer

Different kinds of cancer affect women. They are Breast cancer, Colorectal (colon) cancer, Gynecologic cancers-(Cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal, vulvar), HPV-associated cancers, Lung cancer, Prostate cancer, Skin cancer.

## Sexual Problems in Women

There are many problems that can keep a woman from enjoying sex. They include: -Lack of sexual desire, Inability to become aroused, Lack of orgasm, or sexual climax, Painful intercourse. These problems may have physical or psychological causes. Physical causes may include conditions like diabetes, heart disease, nerve disorders, or hormone problems. Some drugs can also affect desire and function. Psychological causes may include work-related stress and anxiety. They may also include depression or

concerns about marriage or relationship problems. For some women, the problem results from past sexual trauma.

### **Uterine Diseases**

The uterus, or womb, is the place where a baby grows when a woman is pregnant. The first sign of a problem with the uterus may be bleeding between periods or after sex. Causes can include hormones, thyroid problems, fibroids, polyps, cancer, infection, or pregnancy. Treatment depends on the cause. Sometimes birth control pills treat hormonal imbalances. If a thyroid problem is the cause, treating it may also stop the bleeding. If one has cancer or hyperplasia, an overgrowth of normal cells in the uterus, one may need surgery. With two other uterine problems, tissue that normally lines the uterus grows where it is not supposed to. In endometriosis, it grows outside the uterus. In adenomyosis, it grows in the uterus's outside walls. Pain killers may help but other treatments include hormones and surgery.

### **Menopause**

Menopause is the time in a woman's life when one's period stops. It usually occurs naturally, most often after age 45. Menopause happens because the woman's ovaries stop producing the hormones estrogen and progesterone. A woman has reached menopause when she has not had a period for one year. Changes and symptoms can start several years earlier. They include: A change in periods - shorter or longer, lighter or heavier, with more or less time in between, Hot flushes and/or night sweats, Trouble sleeping, Vaginal dryness, Mood swings, Trouble focusing, Less hair on head, more on face.

### **Healthy Weight - not a diet, a lifestyle!**

When it comes to weight loss, there's no lack of fad diets promising fast results. But such diets limit your nutritional intake, can be unhealthy, and tend to fail in the long run. The key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight isn't about short-term dietary changes. It's about a lifestyle that includes healthy eating, regular physical activity, and balancing the number of calories you consume with the number of calories your body uses. Staying in control of our weight contributes to good health now and as we age.

### **Mental Health**

Our mental health is just as important as our physical health when it comes to living a vital and fulfilling life. If we're suffering from a mental health condition, get help understanding the facts, coping with symptoms and finding the right help. Anxiety and depression are complicated medical issues that need serious attention.

## Women's safety and health issues at work

India's work force has changed in the last 20 years. Though men still outnumber women in the workforce, the percent of women working has steadily increased from 34% in 1990s to 58% today. The percent of men working has been decreasing during this time. Women are now marrying later in life, earning higher educational degrees, delaying childbirth, and having fewer children than in previous years. More women are choosing to continue working while also balancing the traditional parenting responsibilities. Women face different workplace health challenges than men. This is partly because men and women tend to have different kinds of jobs. Women generally have more work-related cases of carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, respiratory diseases, infectious and parasitic diseases, and anxiety and stress disorders. Social, economic, and cultural factors also put women at risk for injury and illness. They may also be less likely to report a work-related injury. Balancing work and family tasks can put additional stress on women, who in many families still take primary responsibility for childcare and eldercare. When family and work demands collide, the resulting stress can lead to physical health problems such as poor appetite, lack of sleep, increase in blood pressure, fatigue, and increased susceptibility to infection. It can also result in mental health problems such as burnout and depression. Many of the barriers to women's empowerment and equity lie ingrained in cultural norms. Many women feel these pressures, while others have become accustomed to being treated inferior to men. Recent studies also show that women face more barriers in the workplace than do men. Gender-related barriers involve sexual harassment, unfair hiring practices, career progression, and unequal pay where women are paid less than men are for performing the same job. Such barriers make it difficult for women to advance in their workplace or receive fair compensation for the work they provide.

### Stress

Often, we take responsibility for solving every detail, every problem, every adversity, whether it's realistic or even sensible to do so. Women are always chronically multitasking and under stress. Preventing stress in real life may be virtually impossible, but managing it well is extremely important for both your physical and emotional health. Stress floods our body with hormones, weakens your immune system, affects brain function and worsens many chronic medical conditions. While short-term stress might cause worry or a sleepless night, stress that lasts longer can produce or contribute to high blood pressure, digestive difficulties, fatigue, heart problems, neck and back pain, obesity, breathing disorders, headaches, insomnia, anger, depression, lowered sexual desire, and more. Fortunately, there are many good ways to short-circuit the effects of stress. People differ in what triggers their stress as well as in which methods successfully manage it. What works to lower one's stress might not work for the other. The wisest course is to find several effective de-stressing techniques. To manage stress, we need to develop ways to pace ourselves and take time out. Stress relievers are vital while facing challenges.



## **Stress busters**

1. Repetitive exercise, such as running, brings forth the stress-busting "relaxation response," according to research and found that the relaxation response changes the way your body and brain react to stress. Simply, we slow our metabolism, heart rate and breathing; lower our blood pressure; and reduce muscle tension. Recent research shows that the relaxation response can change gene expression for long-term benefits. Physical exercise of a very moderate amount, two times a week or more, is the best thing we can do to cope with chronic stress. Stress often comes from trying to control situations or people's actions that are beyond our control. Avoidance also raises stress. So, we should recognize the choices you do have.
2. Saying good things about oneself: This one is so simple, but many of us reinforce our stress by piling on with an internal negative voice. Research shows that affirming our personal values keeps production of cortisol, the stress hormone, low. And make the goals we set for ourselves realistic.
3. Encourage the relaxation response: We should try activities that use repetitive motion or sounds while also pushing aside everyday thoughts that might pop up. This helps quiet your mind. Good stress-relieving repetitive activities: knitting, running, prayer, playing a musical instrument, meditating or chanting a word or phrase.
4. Keep meals and sleep healthy: We should eat more veggies, fruits and whole grains and avoid sugar, caffeine and fatty foods as much as possible. Good fuel promotes emotional resilience and calm and avoid eating when not hungry—another sign of chronic stress that can just lead to more tense feelings. Stress might also cause sleep loss, which makes us feel more stressed. We should support healthy sleep by winding down at night, avoiding caffeine or food before bed and leaving enough time for a good night's rest.
5. Finding a passion: Stress can narrow our vision, so it helps to move outside the boundaries of our current situation. We should start with a small step. Many women find stress relief through a new passion for a career, hobby or cause.

## **Prevention of Violence**

Violence is a serious public health problem. From infants to the elderly, it affects people in all stages of life. In 2010, over 16,250 people were victims of homicide and over 38,360 took their own life. Amongst them, the majority victims were women. The number of violent deaths tells only part of the story. Many more survive violence and are left with permanent physical and emotional scars. Violence also erodes communities by reducing productivity, decreasing property values, and disrupting social services.

## **Alternative Medicine**

The complementary and alternative medicine field has come a long way. Natural remedies and healthy solutions are now widely accepted as effective and practical strategies for self-care and prevention. From supplements to massage to integrative therapies, we're here to help you sort through it all.

## Conclusion

With the easy accessibility and affordability of e-learning (electronic learning), women can now study from the comfort of their home anywhere, anytime. By empowering themselves educationally through new technologies like e-learning, women are also learning new skills that will come in handy in today's advancing globalized world.

Women all over the world are challenged by a number of obstacles that restrict their ability to play significant roles in their communities and the broader society. For a long time they have lagged far behind men in key socio-economic indicators that place them at a huge disadvantage. Two thirds of the 774 million adult illiterates worldwide are women, the same proportion for the past 20 years and across most regions, according to the United Nations' World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics. Women are less likely to have access to land, credit, decent jobs even though a growing body of research shows that the achievement of gender equality has enormous socio-economic ramifications. Occupational segregation and gender wage gaps continue to persist in all parts of the world. Research shows that empowering women fuels thriving economies, spurring productivity and growth. Empowered women and girls have a truly transformative role to play in their communities but they are rarely afforded the opportunities that will allow them to fulfil their enormous potential. Narrowing the existing gender gap in employment could increase income per capita by as much as 10%–14% in the BRICs and other key emerging markets by 2020, according to the report Women Hold up Half the Sky by Goldman Sachs.

Around the world, healthy, educated, employed, and empowered women break poverty cycles - not only for themselves, but for their families, communities and countries, too.

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