

laws and government action, e.g. government should provide smokeless chulhas (stove) to reduce indoor pollutions or reduce air pollution by imposing fine on industries setup in residential areas. Also, there is a law against selling of tobacco products near schools and colleges so that children do not start smoking early.

Having one or more of these conditions such as - high blood pressure, high blood glucose levels, high blood fat levels and excess body fat (being overweight) can result in Cardiovascular diseases (Heart disease, Stroke), Diabetes, Cancers and Chronic Respiratory Diseases (Asthma, difficulty in breathing).

Are Non-Communicable Diseases Increasing? If so, then why?

Over the past few years, we are noticing an increase in deaths and illnesses due to Non-Communicable Diseases. Some of the reasons are:

- People shifting from rural areas to urban areas and making changes in lifestyles related to diet, exercise and other behaviours.
- Increase life expectancy of people and thus more people living at an increasing age.
- Decrease in physical activity due to availability of motor vehicles for transport.
- Lack of adequate, safe spaces for regular exercise.
- Availability and use of tobacco and alcohol for all age groups.
- Increased use of foods high in fats, salt, sugar and sugar sweetened beverages.
- Low consumption of fruits and vegetables because of high costs/lower availability.
- Increased consumption of refined foods (foods that are available in packaged form).
- Growing environmental pollution (air, food, water).

What is the Effect of Non-Communicable Diseases on the Poor and Women?

A common perception is that Non-Communicable Diseases are a disease of the rich. However, this understanding is not correct. Poor and vulnerable people can suffer from NCDs too. Two important factors that can cause NCDs are poverty and malnutrition.

As you know, many children are born with low birth weight (weighing less than 2.5 kg at birth). The lack of nutrition for the baby while in the womb, has consequences in adulthood. While growing up, the bodies of such Low birth weight babies are not able to adapt to fatty or sugary foods. This results in an increase in risk factors like hypertension, high blood fat levels, and high blood glucose levels.



Poverty contributes to NCDs in several ways, including maternal malnutrition. Also, poor people are not able to buy and consume healthy foods such as nuts, fresh fruits, etc. As