

Monsoon Alert

H1N1 is not the only disease on the prowl; there are several diseases that come with monsoon. Eating healthy will help avoid diseases says Ketaki Khedekar.



Image Courtesy : Google

One moment you look out of your window it is bright, clear, and warm. And then without any warning there are grey clouds, thunder, lightning, damp air, it starts drizzling and then the mercury level suddenly drops. After hours of good down pour, the skies clear up, there are cool breezes and everything around looks just so clean, neat and fresh. Rains... aren't they just amazing? The fresh new leaves on the trees, impromptu holidays, splashing about in muddy puddles or simply getting wet in the pouring shower... Rain is the root cause of all the laziness. Have you ever felt like getting out of the bed when it pouring heavily outside? If at all you do get out of the bed do you ever feel like getting to work or college or school? All you ever want to do is get a mug full of coffee and sit by the window romancing the rains. Well, however romantic that sounds, on the downside, these very rains also spell humid weather, flooded roads, mosquitoes and diseases. Despite the panic around swine flu, it is important to know that monsoon comes along with a glut of other food and water borne diseases as well. Common ailments during monsoons are food-poisoning, diarrhoea, cholera, rheumatism, asthma, malaria, jaundice, typhoid, gastroenteritis, cough, cold and fever, fungal infections. According to an article dated August 15, 2009 in Mumbai Mirror about 35 people have died of monsoon related diseases between August 1 and 13 and the number is increasing. The article says that the swine flu pandemonium has taken the focus away from monsoon-related diseases that according to BMC's health department are proving to be more fatal.

Monsoons reduce the immunity of our body and digestive system making us susceptible to various infections. So, it becomes essential to take extra care and pay great attention to our eating habits so as to remain healthy and fit during the monsoons. Celebrity personal trainer, fitness and yoga professional and nutrition expert, Sanobar P. advises, "Since monsoon diseases are all water borne diseases, one has to be very cautious about the intake of water or any fluids. One should have only boiled and purified water. Drink beverages made from treated boiled water and do not add ice, even if it is not chilled. Avoid drinking juices, milkshakes, lemon juice, and buttermilk from street vendors. Avoid golas, kulfis, ice candies etc only because you cannot be sure of the

water used." Monsoons provide the most suitable environment for breeding of bacteria. So eating outside, especially chaat items, have to be avoided. Sanobar adds, "If you are a real junkie you can savour on bhel at the most and that too once a

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while." Fried items like vada pav, samosa, pakoda though are always tempting during monsoons, they should be kept away. Piping hot pakoras and bhajiyas are perfect for the monsoon if made at home. Sanobar reiterates, "Monsoon impairs the digestive system. It should be strengthened by having a little ginger juice and honey every day. Coffee should be strictly avoided. One can replace normal tea with lemon tea, as lemon contains Vitamin C, and thus it acts as a refresher." Fruits like banana, apples, cherries, plums, are available during this season. Citrus fruits like oranges; sweet lime, etc should be consumed in large quantities as they contain Vitamin C. Papaya is also advisable because it helps in the exchange of heat during this season. Instead of going in for heavy food items, one should consume light and easily digestible foods like boiled potatoes or cooked vegetables. Avoid gaseous foods like soyabean, rajma, chana etc. Pastas, corn, cottage cheese, chicken, fish, eggs are very good in monsoon. Soups like manchow or cream of spinach are also very good as they help to keep the body warm. Red meat should be avoided. Garlic, ginger, pepper, asafoetida, turmeric, coriander, cumin strengthens the digestive system and improves immunity. Cinnamon keeps water borne infections at bay and a pinch of it should be consumed daily. Adding ginger and mint to your tea and other beverages also helps. If possible, avoid leafy vegetables during the season as there is a presence of mud, dirt and worms in it. One also has to be very careful about vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage, lady finger, and brinjals as they contain worms. If still used, be careful to wash them thoroughly. Avoid eating fruits and salads from street vendors, as raw chopped vegetables as well as fruits spoil fast. It is also very unsafe as it can be infected with germs. Avoid sea food and shell fish this season. One should opt for grilled sandwiches instead of plain cold sandwiches. Cakes and breads made of refined flour (maida) should be avoided in favour of brown bread. Red wine is good in the monsoon. On the other hand, hard drinks should be avoided. So guys take the cue and eat right to enjoy a healthy and safe monsoon!

Do's
 Have only boiled/purified water
 Cut down on tea and avoid coffee
 Eat lots of fruits
 Avoid outside food
 Avoid gaseous foods and red meat
 Avoid leafy vegetables

ketakikhedekar@gmail.com