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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

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4416	17.11.2017	17.11.2017	Patna Bihar	www.timesofindia.com/English https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/air-pollution-triggers-health-hazards/articleshowprint/61677205.cms
Title:	Air pollution triggers health hazards in district Patna, Bihar			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU - Patna, SSU- Bihar			

Winter is normally an enjoyable season, but it has lately turned into the most polluted time of the year in Patna. With the air quality index (AQI) crossing 400-mark in the state capital, the pollution level in the city is posing serious health risks to residents, especially children and elderly people. The worst is the impact of particulate matter, which invades the lungs and triggers respiratory diseases and even cancer.

Health experts said advisory for higher AQI prescribes minimal outdoor exposure at times of high pollution. Many physicians also suggest curtailing outdoor exercises and jogging in high air pollution conditions.

"Air pollutants trigger allergies, cough, viral fever, lung infections, high blood pressure, asthma, anxiety, tiredness, diabetes, heart disease and irreversible lung damage. Number of patients with complaints of such ailments in Patna has increased almost by 20% over the past couple of weeks. Moreover, the viral and respiratory ailments tend to prolong as the body is unable to recover due to temperature variation and pollution. A strong pathogen seems to have developed due to spread of

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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diseases like chikungunya and dengue, which is suspected to be leading to prolonged viral ailments," city-based physician Diwakar Tejashwi said.

However, the authorities are mostly seen taking corrective steps only "on paper". Health experts suggest that a few steps like using respirator mask and air purifier at home, cutting down on early morning outdoor activities like jogging and walking and keeping plants that can cleanse the air at home will be of great help.

While anti-pollution masks top the chart in the measures to combat pollution, health experts also suggest air purifiers to tackle indoor pollution. There are a number of air- purifiers available in the market, including carbon purifiers, which uses activated carbon as an absorbent and takes in impurities. Similarly, ionic air purifiers, which works based on ionisation of air particles, are also suggested. Ozone and ultraviolet purifiers are also available in the market, which clear the air inside the house by oxidising and using ultraviolet rays, respectively.

"Air purifiers help in improving the indoor air quality by removing smaller allergens like dust, smoke and chemicals among other pollutants. Its demand is gradually rising in Patna. The longer the air purifiers work, the cleaner the air gets," said Ashok Videsariya, owner of an electronics shop on S P Verma Road.

The demand for respirator mask has also increased in the city lately. Pharmaceutical store owners said respirator masks with N99, N95 or P100 rating or certification from the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) are highly effective in preventing pollutants to go inside the nose. The NIOSH N95 mask can filter 95% of particles greater than 0.3 microns, which is even smaller than PM2.5.

"The N95 masks are in huge demand. These masks are priced in the range of Rs 50 to Rs 250. Apart from masks manufactured by Indian manufacturers, Chinese masks are also high in demand because of their relatively low price," said Prabhat Kumar, a pharma shop owner on Govind Mitra Road.

WHAT TO DO?

- * Use carbon, ionic, ozone and ultraviolet air purifiers
- * Avoid early morning walks and heavy exercises that can cause strain on lungs
- * Keep plants inside home

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