

## Chronic Sinusitis Can Affect Vision: Study

**New Delhi, May 2:** Don't ignore that common cold, it could turn into chronic sinusitis and if not treated for a long time could affect vision or may harm the brain.

Specialists say chronic sinus cases, which have seen a rise due to environment and vehicular pollution, could be caused due to cold, allergies, infections and even virus, fungi, bacteria, toxic medications and nasal abnormalities.

Even gulping down chilled drinks could lead to sinus or spaces around the nose, said Dr R C Deka, Head of ENT Department at AIIMS.

"To beat the heat, many gulp down chilled beer and drinks, not knowing that it could cause harm and lead to sinus," he said.

The doctor said sinus cases are on the rise, mostly due to bacteria and fungus in the environment. "Traffic pollution plays a big role in causing this problem. If the irritation of the throat and nose persists for a long time then one should not ignore the signs," he said.

Also facial pain, nasal discharge and blockage, persistent dry cough, sneezing, headaches, running nose and change of voice should warn a person that they need treatment for sinus," he said.

Deka said fungal sinusitis could also affect brain and vision significantly as they are close to the nose. "A person's vision, power of smell and brain could be affected.

But it is only when it becomes chronic," he said.

Deka has conducted a study to find out what medication works well in sinus cases.

The ongoing study, which was first conducted in a batch of 88 patients who were divided into groups, showed that combination therapy, anti-fungal tablets and steroid spray, hold great promise to cure allergic fungal sinusitis.

According to Ameet Kishore, Senior Consultant at Apollo Hospital, chronic sinusitis and asthma are interlinked.

"Nose sinuses and lung are connected. And anything that affects the nose sinuses affects lung," he said.

He said diabetics are also more prone to get infections in the body and are thus more prone to get sinusitis due to infections.

"Fungal sinusitis is higher on diabetic patients as compared to non-diabetic," he said.

It has also been seen that this chronic problem could be one of the reason for a person to snore.

"The air passages behind the nose and throat end close when a person goes into deep sleep, resulting in reduced oxygen supply to lung, heart and brain. This could lead to snoring and people could find it difficult to breathe," he added.

If one is prone to chronic sinusitis, then they should avoid cigarette and cut down their alcohol intake. "Smoking and regular alcohol intake can lead to swelling in the sinus membranes," Deka said.

Said Dr C V Karthikeyan, Assistant Professor at AIIMS, if people don't get relief after taking anti-biotics then they should visit a doctor.

He said people should fortify their immune system and do regular exercises and take healthy nutritional food, especially vitamin C that builds up immunity.

"Infections could affect you if a person nutrition intake is less or the person is anemic," he said.

Dr Alok Agrawal, ENT specialist in Sir Ganga Ram hospital, believes that excessive use of body sprays and fragrant objects are also harmful to the body and could cause sinus.

He said if not treated the sinus can even cause blindness and meningitis as the location is just below the eyes and brain.

"It is necessary that patient should take proper treatment. As the chronic sinus can lead to eroding of bones and acute fungal infection that can make patient blind and cause brain fever," he said.