

**Press Release**

*For Immediate Publication*

## **Understanding your Liver and taking care to prevent diseases**

### **World Liver Day: April 19**

**New Delhi, April 17, 2017:** World Liver day, celebrated on 19<sup>th</sup> April every year, is a chance to build awareness and understand how important the liver is for our body and how liver diseases can be effectively managed. Liver disease is the 10<sup>th</sup> most common cause of death in India according to the WHO. However, very few people know that the liver is the second largest organ in the body and is a key player in our body's digestive system. Everything we consume, including medicine, passes through the liver. It fights infections, regulates blood sugar, removes toxins, controls cholesterol, making proteins and releases bile to help digestion. We cannot survive without the liver, it can be easily damaged if we don't take proper care.

Symptoms of liver damage do not present themselves till very late. Diseases such as such as hepatitis A, B, C, Hepatocellular cancer and cirrhosis often occur because of bad lifestyle choices, excessive consumption of alcohol and drugs, continuous intake of unhealthy food over a long period of time, sedentary lifestyle and lack of exercise. Currently there is no cure for a severely diseased liver and therefore it is critical to take care of this multi-functionary organ and gland. The only way to manage a failed liver is to get a liver transplant.

This **World Liver Day, Fortis Healthcare** encourages you to understand your liver and take care of it:

#### **Causes for liver disease:**

- Can be inherited or genetic
- Unhealthy lifestyle and eating patterns
- Hepatitis A, B and C infections
- High intake of alcoholic drinks, high cholesterol foods
- High BMI (body mass index), which is associated with Type 2 diabetes risk
- Obesity

#### **Symptoms of liver disease and liver cancer:**

- Sudden weight loss
- Decrease in appetite or a feeling of fullness after a small meal
- Nausea and vomiting
- General weakness and fatigue

- Pain in upper abdomen (right side or near right shoulder blade)
- Enlarged liver (hepatomegaly)
- Enlarged spleen
- Abdominal swelling (ascites)
  - Jaundice

### **Preventing liver disease and tips for liver care:**

- Adopt healthy lifestyle and have a balanced diet
- Eat foods from all the food groups: grains, proteins, dairy products, fruits, vegetables and fats. Include green leafy vegetables, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, apple and walnut in your diet.
- Eat foods that have lot of fibres such as fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads, rice and cereals such as quinoa, millet and buckwheat
- Ensure safe blood transfusions to avoid contracting hepatitis A, B, C
- Maintain personal hygiene and be sure to wash hands after using the washroom
- Avoid tap water when travelling
- Say No to alcohol, tobacco and drugs
- Exercise regularly

**Dr Vivek Vij, Director, Liver Transplant, Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, New Delhi** says, “A key player in the digestive system of the human body, the liver processes everything we eat and drink including medication. It is impossible to survive without the functioning of the liver and it is an organ which needs to be well maintained and taken care of. Due to the fact that it is a multi-functionary organ, it is susceptible to viruses, toxic substances, contaminants present in food and water. However even when it is under siege, the liver is slow to complain as it is a tough, hardy part of our body. Often, people with liver problems are unaware of any problem as they will experience few or no symptoms. While there have been major advances in treating liver diseases, there is no complete cure. Therefore, it is very important to make healthy lifestyle choices to prevent liver damage, and getting the necessary vaccines against viruses which can cause liver disease.”

**Dr Gourdas Choudhri, Director & HOD, Department of Gastrointestinal and Hepatobiliary Sciences, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurgaon** says, “Liver cancer today is the fifth most common cancer claiming millions of lives annually. Recent developments in the diagnosis and treatment has helped to cure many patients. Remaining vigilant and getting health check-ups done regularly can help in the early detection of liver cancer. A second factor to remember is that liver cancer occurs almost always in diseased livers. The importance of checking and screening for Hepatitis B and C as well as taking early and sustained care of the liver through a healthy, active lifestyle, therefore, cannot be over-emphasized.”

