

This summer, keep your stomach cool by keeping yourself hydrated

26 May 2019 | Opinion | By Sonali Wankhade

Avoid refrigerated and cold juices to keep yourself hydrated as it may aggravate stomach and spleen problems



With the temperatures soaring as high as 38 degrees in the city, loss of appetite is becoming extremely common this summer. Appetite loss combined with dehydration and diarrhoea makes way for a host of gastric and indigestion problems. Eating anything that's oily or spicy during the summer can further add to your digestion woes. Thus health experts suggest that it becomes highlight important to know how often one should eat and the portion size of the meals to avoid poor digestion during summer. All the more when the summer heat this time seems nowhere in the mood to subside. Right after heat waves, inflammation bowel disease and stomach bugs are also common scenarios. Instances of infectious gastroenteritis marked by vomiting and diarrhoea also enhance in the summer temperatures especially in children. Doctors also suggest avoiding outside food especially street foods during summer.

"The common symptoms of summer sickness include loss of appetite, dizziness, weakness, frequent headaches and chest pains. Water and food contamination are the main reasons behind people falling sick during the summer season. Therefore, it is important to focus on your diet and keep yourself hydrated to maintain adequate levels of fluid in the body," said Dr.Jayakanth MJConsultant Internal Medicine, Columbia Asia Hospital Sarjapur Road.

He also added that it is as crucial to maintaining the temperatures inside your body as it is to maintain in our surroundings. As soon as we feel the heat, we avoid direct exposure to the sun, look for shade and try to get into an air-conditioned environment at the earliest. However, we often miss noting the heat intensity within our stomach and our bodies which plays a major role in keeping us cool during summer.

A main external cause of digestive issues during summer is the prevailing pathogenic dampness. When this pathogenic dampness invades, the stomach i.e. the digestive system as well as the spleen which is responsible for converting food into energy is usually the first body systems to be affected and start functioning inappropriately.

"Avoid refrigerated and cold juices to keep yourself hydrated as it may aggravate stomach and spleen problems. Instead opt for whole fruits like watermelon, guava, orange, and mango as these seasonal fruits supply necessary nutrients in the body to boost immunity," added Dr.Jayakanth MJ.

Some simple tips to allow your digestion to work smoothly as the temperatures rise are:

Eat Less: Avoid heavy meals as the digestive system becomes sensitive during summer. It is best to eat smaller meals at shorter intervals as it goes easy on your digestive system and keeps you from feeling hungry as well. Also, switch to green leafy vegetables and fresh fruits that are easy to digest and will help you stay hydrated for long.

Keep yourself hydrated: It's very common to lose your appetite during the summer season. Therefore, make sure that you include enough fluids like water, milk, buttermilk, coconut water, mango panna to prevent dehydration. Also, include fresh fruits as they will not only provide vitamins and minerals but also regulate water content in the body.

Include herbs in your diet: Include herbs like coriander, fennel seeds, cilantro and ginger in food preparation as these are good for digestion. These will help you improve your digestive capabilities as well as absorb gases, reduce stress and help blood flow to the digestive system. Also, make sure you include sufficient salt in your diet, as you tend to lose much of body salt through sweating during summers.

Avoid Spicy and Fried Food: Stomach inflammation is a common problem during the summer season. Therefore, avoid eating spicy and fried food as it makes your spleen weak, leading to stomach inflammation. You can instead include beans, lotus root and carrots in your diet to help strengthen the spleen and stomach.

Doctors also point out that binge-drinking, late-night meals, overeating, too many painkillers, and the sedentary lifestyle also upset the stomach in summers. Stomach heat occurs as a result of a faster digestive process. Though the stomach heat can earnestly impact stomach fluids and lead to serious health complications. However, it can certainly be brought under control and quite naturally. Certain food items aid in keeping the temperature cool and bring down the excess of acid levels. Home remedies work as a better form of treatment. Foods like tomatoes, apples, pears, watermelon, cucumber, yam, sweet potatoes, pearl barley, millet, beans, seaweed, and white gourd can also help.

Dr Jayakanth MJ, Consultant Internal Medicine, Columbia Asia Hospital Sarjapur Road