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## Eat non-veg food to reduce heart attack risk: study

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New Delhi, July 14: Vegetarians think again! Eat fish, meat, and chicken regularly to substantially reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases like heart attack and stroke, finds a new survey conducted by Delhi doctors.

'Those who eat vegetarian food face a deficiency of Vitamin B12 and this is one of the reason behind cardiovascular diseases. On the other hand, this vitamin is available in plenty in non-vegetarian food,' said Arun Garg, a senior doctor at the Max Hospital here.

Garg, the lead researcher of the study told IANS that he has observed the trend in nearly 5,000 patients over the last five years. He said vitamin B12 deficiency increases the levels of homocysteine, an amino acid.

"Even those who consume non-vegetarian food occasionally are not protected. The risk in vegetarians is four times higher than in non-vegetarians," the study revealed.

The study found that if the body poses a higher level of homocysteine, it increases the chances of blood clotting, which squeezes the blood vessels. Thus it decreases the flow of blood supply to the brain and causes stroke.

"This is known as ischemic stroke. It can cause significant disability in the form of paralysis, loss of speech, loss of vision, unsteadiness, double vision or even loss of consciousness. If blood supply to a major part of brain is compromised, it can cause early death," the study added.

The doctors said that for the last five years, 4,680 Out Patient Department (OPD) patients were screened at two Max hospitals in Delhi for vitamin B12 and homocysteine levels. It was found that 60 percent patients had vitamin B12 levels below the desired level. And out of these, a majority are vegetarian.

'I am not advocating non-veg food but this is our finding. Those who are vegetarian should take vitamin B12 supplements,' Garg told IANS.

--IANS