After a sweltering summer, the rain showers bring a much needed respite for which we all are waiting desperately. However, the random & inconsistent monsoon downpour and typhoons also brings with it humid weather, flooded roads, mosquitoes and diseases. It can be a period of great hopes and of greater despair as it welcomes a multitude of health problems, so we must be ready to handle monsoon related health ailments. We need to be careful about the food we eat and the water we drink. Also during monsoon the body’s natural resistance is low.

**Monsoon Health Ailments**

It is notorious for bringing with it a host of diseases which are spread by vectors like mosquitoes; others are either air-borne or spread by infected water and food. They can range from:

- Simple cold and cough [flu]
- Malaria
- Dengue
- Typhoid
- Diarrhea/Gastroenteritis
- Food poisoning
- Cholera
- Jaundice
- Leptospirosis
- Conjunctivitis
- Skin infections-bacterial/fungal
- Allergic rashes due to insects bite
- Slips & falls

**Stay Healthy this Monsoon**

Since water is a carrier of various diseases, one needs to be extra cautious. Here are some precautions that will allow you to enjoy the showers, without falling prey to monsoon illness.

**Monsoon Health Guide**

- Always carry raingears to protect from downpour.
Hot and humid climate during monsoon are ideal for fungal growth. So keep dry during monsoon. Do not enter air conditioned room with wet cloths to prevent fungal infections of the skin or nails.

Always use sturdy footwear that will give you a good grip to avoid slips/falls.

If you are suffering from asthma or diabetes, avoid staying anywhere with wet walls. It promotes the growth of fungus.

Wash your hands with soap before handling food, after eating food and after visiting the toilet. Maintain good personal hygiene.

Prevent stagnation of water near your house, fountains, potted plants, flower pots, coolers etc. All sources of water such as storage tanks should be covered and cleaned to avert breeding of mosquitoes.

Use insect repellents, disinfectants and take precautions to stay away from mosquitoes, flies, cockroaches and termites.

Avoid eating at places where mass cooking goes on like at marriages or religious gatherings where food poisonings may occur.

Diabetics should not walk bare foot since the soil is a reservoir of all types of germs.

Where possible, try to avoid walking through dirty water. Besides leptospirosis, it can lead to numerous fungal infections of feet & nails.

Despite the precautions, if you develop any signs of illness, consult your doctor immediately.

**Nutrition Tips for Monsoon**

Following dos and don'ts will help you enjoy the rains without worrying about diseases.

Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly, particularly leafy vegetables and cauliflower, which not only contain larvae and worms, but also dirt.

Eat in moderation as the body finds it harder to digest food during the monsoon.
Drink only boiled and filtered water, and make sure that it is consumed within 24 hours of boiling.

Eat freshly cooked food. Do not consume leftover foods kept in the refrigerator.

Moong dal is easy to digest and should be the dal of choice for the season.

Garlic, pepper, ginger, asafoetida (hing), jeera powder, turmeric and coriander help enhance digestion and improve immunity.

Fried snacks seem really tempting in the monsoons but keep it in moderation once in a while.

Vegetables recommended during the rains are the non-leafy ones such as — snake gourd (parwal), gourd (dudhi), ridge gourd (turi), cluster beans (gavaar), apple gourd (tinda) and bitter gourd (karela).

It is better to stick to seasonal fruits like pomegranates, apples and cherries. Amla and citrus fruits contain lots of vitamin C and are good for improving immunity levels.

Avoid excellent road side temptations such as chaat, ‘panipuris’ or pakoras. Pollution of water and raw vegetables is very common during this season.

Clean your salads under running water. Steaming them is best way to get rid of germs.

Monsoon Fitness Tips

First thing which MONSOON brings in our mind is fun, enjoyment and of course water logging. This effects our outdoor activities. So, does it mean that you sit at home and toss away all your regular fitness regimen? Absolutely not! Here are some great ways to following a monsoon fitness regimen and remain fit and active during this season.
For Exercising Indoors-

- Stick to the same scheduled time plan for your workout sessions at home. Start with simple stretching exercises.

- Purchase few simple exercising devices like dumbbells, skipping rope etc. If you always wanted to buy an indoor cycle or treadmill, this is the right time.

- If you are someone who is not into working out in the gym, you can do some simple exercises at home as well. Sit-ups, waist bends, knee bends, calf exercises etc.

- The stairs in your house are superb exercising device themselves. Walking up and down the stairs, is a superb tip for a good monsoon fitness.

- Practice yoga as it can be performed both indoors & outdoors.

- An indoor jog on the spot or around a house jog is also beneficial.

- If you love to dance, dance like nobody is watching. This helps you keep yourself flexible.

- Cleaning your house is the best way to keep yourself from becoming a couch potato. Whenever there is a drizzle outside and you are stuck indoors for a couple of hours, clean out the shelves, cupboards or rooms.

Welcome the Rains, not the Diseases they bring.
To stay healthy, watch what you eat and drink.

Get Wet, But Remain Safe!

Medical Section TIFR