

Health over junk: Straight from the heart

Calcutta: Sradha Sharma of Class IX was happy to learn how to act during an emergency. "Cardiac arrest and choking can happen to any person, regardless of age. Now I know how to save a person," said the student of Delhi Public School, Ruby Park.

Her confidence came after a session, 100 Beats 1000 Actions, organised by Fortis Hospital, Anandapur-Kolkata, in association with **Young Metro, The Telegraph**, admissiontree.in and Friends FM. The campaign, which marked World Heart Day on September 29, aimed to teach students of five schools in the city the importance of staying fit and some life-saving lessons such as Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

Doctors interacted with the students of Classes VIII to XII, telling them why they must eat right and be conscious of their heart health.

Dr Sanjoy Sen Gupta, a consultant cardiac surgeon at the Anandapur hospital, opened the session with an observation. "The next generation may have to fight a little more

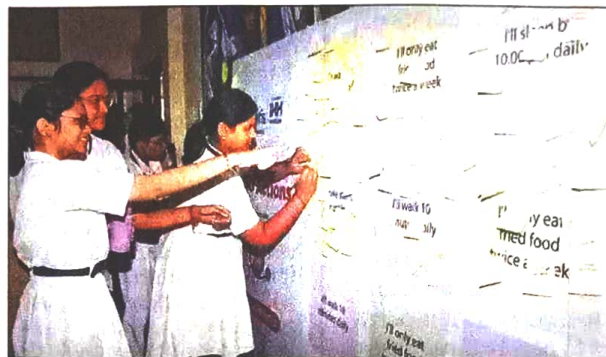
than what we have. India is now the diabetes capital of the world."

Hrishita Roy of Class IX agreed. The Garden High School student blamed junk food consumption for various health issues. However, classmate Subhasri Rakshit confessed it will take her time to give up on street food.

According to interventional cardiologist Dr Basabendra Choudhury, who attended the session at DPS, Ruby Park, right lifestyle choices matter. "Conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure and abnormal cholesterol levels may be because of a sedentary lifestyle and obesity. Ultimately, the heart suffers," he said.

Class XI student Mohammad Ibrahim Azzam of the school shared his fitness routine. "I am a proud cyclist, and I go on cycle rides every day. I jog and run too." Not all students, however, could lead such an active life.

Different doctors visited different schools, training children and giving them health tips. Consultant and head of emergency medicine Dr Sanjukta Dutta talked



Students of Delhi Public School, Ruby Park, write on a pledge wall to stay fit. Picture by Arijit Ganguly

about cases where patients' families would request shock therapy for a deceased body after being misinformed about the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). "The shock is required only when the heart is beating in abnormal rhythms, not completely stopped," she said. She added that relentless screen time and a sedentary life prevent children from practising a healthy lifestyle.

Live demonstrations were also held to teach students how to administer CPR and identify signs of heart risk.

Kritika Dubey of Class IX, Shri Shikshayatan School, realised what she saw in movies was all wrong and that there is more than one CPR procedure. Dr K.M. Mandana, director of cardiothoracic and vascular surgery at the Anandapur hospital, addressed them.

According to educators, children are more conscious of mental and physical well-being these days. "We aimed to translate that awareness into consistent daily habits," said Madhumita Sengupta, principal of B.D.M. International.

Agreed Maj. Gen. V.N. Chaturvedi (retd), secretary-general, Vidya Mandir Society: "Children today are much more aware. However, achieving optimal health requires synergy between parents and schools."

"This workshop helped students understand the importance of a balanced lifestyle and the impact of junk food, excessive screen time and substance abuse," said Rajashri Biswas, principal of Garden High School.

Sagar Agarwal, owner and managing director of DPS, Ruby Park, found the Pledge Wall meaningful. "Each child chose a healthy habit and made a personal commitment to it," he said.

"Teaching CPR procedures to schoolchildren is vital for empowering future lifesavers," added Sangeeta Tandon, principal of Shri Shikshayatan School. The event concluded with students receiving blank sticky notes on which they wrote healthy habits they wished to follow, placing them on a pledge board.

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