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ASIA

IMA and Abbott Launch Vitamin D Day Initiative Amid Rising Deficiency Concerns

22 June 2026 | News

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In a major public health initiative aimed at addressing the growing burden of Vitamin D deficiency in India, the Indian Medical Association (IMA), in collaboration with global healthcare company Abbott, has designated June 21 the longest day of the year as â??Vitamin D Day of Indiaâ??.

The initiative seeks to raise awareness about the importance of Vitamin D, often referred to as the â??sunshine vitamin,â?• and encourage preventive health practices such as safe sun exposure, timely screening, and appropriate medical management where required.

June 21, which offers the most daylight hours of the year, has been chosen to highlight the role of sunlight in the bodyâ??s natural production of Vitamin D. Health experts believe the observance can serve as an annual platform to sustain public awareness and strengthen doctor-patient conversations about Vitamin D deficiency.

Despite being a tropical country with abundant sunshine, India continues to face a high prevalence of Vitamin D deficiency. According to estimates, nearly 77 per cent of the Indian population is deficient in Vitamin D. Factors such as indoor lifestyles, limited outdoor activity, increased use of sun protection, urban living conditions, and air pollution contribute to reduced exposure to sunlight and inadequate Vitamin D synthesis.

Vitamin D plays a critical role in maintaining bone health, muscle function, and immune system performance. Deficiency often goes undiagnosed because it lacks obvious symptoms, but can lead to weak bones, muscle pain, fatigue, and compromised immunity over time.

Commenting on the initiative, Dr Anilkumar J. Nayak, National President, IMA, said, â??Declaring June 21 as Vitamin D Day is an important step in addressing a widespread yet under-recognised public health issue. As doctors, we witness the health impact of Vitamin D deficiency across age groups. This initiative will help advance awareness and encourage people to take simple, preventive actions for better health.â?•

Dr Jejoe Karankumar, Medical Affairs Director for Abbott India, emphasised the importance of early detection and management. â??Vitamin D deficiency is common and often silent, yet over time it can weaken bones and affect immunity. Spending about 15â??30 minutes in sunlight between 10 am and 2 pm can help the body naturally produce Vitamin D, depending on individual factors. However, sunlight alone may not always be sufficient. Since symptoms are not always obvious, regular screening is important. If levels are low, a doctor can guide the right steps to restore and maintain healthy levels,â?• he said.

Through the annual observance of Vitamin D Day, IMA and Abbott aim to promote healthier lifestyles and encourage individuals to proactively monitor their Vitamin D status, helping build a healthier and more resilient population.