

City woman's asthma attack turns fatal due to overweight

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Aarti Bedi, a 32-year-old Mahim resident, went through a nightmare recently. Aarti, who weighs about **198 kgs**, was left undiagnosed with an asthma attack for three days at her residence, as she could not even move about due to her weight. With the help of about 20 neighbours, Aarti, wrapped in bed sheets, was taken down to the ambulance from her third floor flat. It was a life threatening situation for Aarti who is currently recovering at **BombayHospital**.



Aarti Bedi recovering at Bombay Hospital

“With fat accumulation, the lung’s expansion capacity gets compromised leading to increase in severity of asthma,” explains Dr. Ramen Goel, Bariatric and Weight Loss surgeon. Being overweight, Aarti’s carbon dioxide level reached a critical 90 per cent, much above the normal threshold of 40 per cent.

Dr Kapil Salgia, chest physician, BombayHospital, with the help of her team of ICU specialists, succeeded in stabilising Aarti’s **lung functioning** and she was taken off the ventilator in three days.

However, the threat of a recurrence of asthma attack in such patients could only be lessened by decreasing body weight. “In comparison to normal body weight patients, obese people are at higher risk in terms of severity and frequency of **asthma** attacks. The only way to counteract the threat is by lessening the body weight. If the patient is too overweight or has some other complication, wherein increased physical exercise may not be sufficient, surgery will be necessary to reduce weight,” adds Dr. Ramen Goel.

Aarti underwent **Sleeve Gastrectomy surgery**, in which two-thirds of the stomach is removed, resulting in a banana-shaped stomach. This reduces hunger and gives a feeling of fullness with small meals. The surgery is expected to bring her weight down by around 100 kgs within a year.

Dr. Goel cautioned asthma patients who tend to be overweight “Try to reduce weight and do seek medical assistance even if it is a mild attack for if it turns severe, it will be difficult for an obese patient to withstand.”

Precautions you can take:

Do some form of exercise every day – even taking a brisk walk will help

Watch what you eat – take small but nutritious portions throughout the day

Check your Body Mass Index (BMI) for a healthy weight: height ratio

Consult a physician – for they know best

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