How modern lifestyles can quietly affect your health

UAE DOCTORS EXPLAIN HOW TO BALANCE CONVENIENCE WITH WELLBEING

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Ordering dinner, driving a short distance, or spending the working day at a desk can make life easier. In the UAE, where food delivery, private transport, and digital services are part of everyday life, convenience has become almost second nature.



Doctors say the problem begins when convenience stops being an occasional shortcut and becomes the default way of eating, moving, and living.

The answer is not to abandon delivery apps, cars, or technology. Instead, residents can make small changes that bring movement, better food choices, and healthier routines back into the day.

Dr Unni Rajasekharan Nair, consultant internal medicine at Medcare Royal Speciality Hospital, has noted that convenience becomes a health concern when it consistently replaces physical activity and healthier habits.

The consequences can build gradually, contributing to conditions including weight gain, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and fatty liver disease.

“With desk-based jobs, driving, and relying on delivery services, some people may go through an entire day with very little purposeful movement. Over time, this can contribute to reduced fitness, muscle weakness, joint discomfort, and poorer cardiovascular health,” Nair told Gulf News.

One reason these lifestyle changes can be difficult to recognise is that some of their effects are silent. Nair said people can feel perfectly healthy while blood pressure, blood sugar, or cholesterol levels gradually rise.

There is also a nutritional cost when convenience foods become a daily habit. The same applies to movement. Choosing the car for a short trip or ordering something instead of walking to collect it may appear insignificant, but repeated over weeks and months, these small reductions in activity can add up.

“Good health is not simply about the number on the scales. Energy levels, sleep, muscle strength, cardiovascular fitness, mental wellbeing, and metabolic health are all important.”

Regular health checks can help identify problems early, including in people who do not have noticeable symptoms.

For Dr Syed Naveed Azam, consultant gastroenterologist at RAK Hospital, the growing dependence on delivered and pre-prepared meals has another consequence, a changing digestive health profile.

He mentioned that gastroenterologists are seeing more young adults and busy professionals with lifestyle-driven digestive problems. Irregular eating schedules and late-night meals can disrupt normal digestion.

Eating late can contribute to delayed gastric emptying and nighttime indigestion, while diets that are low in fibre can make it harder to support a healthy gut microbiome.

Azam has pointed out that home cooking remains an ideal option but acknowledged that it is not always realistic for people with demanding schedules.

His advice is therefore to make smarter choices within the delivery routine rather than trying to eliminate it altogether.

“You can minimise digestive problems by making intentional modifications to your delivery orders. Opt for grilled proteins, chicken and fish, instead of fried. Avoid fried foods and excess carbs and go for fresh salads or cooked vegetables,” shared Azam.

Mediterranean-style meals and fish-based Japanese dishes can be better choices than fast food. Sugary drinks and desserts should be limited, while water should remain the main drink throughout the day.

For people who depend heavily on delivery, Azam has recommended keeping simple highfibre foods at home, including pre-washed greens, cucumbers, and chia seeds, which can be added to ordered meals.

According to Dr Murali Krishna Neelakantan, consultant interventional cardiologist at Prime Hospital, the concern is not any single takeaway meal or car journey, but the cumulative effect of repeated choices.

When unhealthy choices are combined with prolonged sitting and limited physical activity, cardiovascular and metabolic risks can rise.