

Fight off Diabetes...

Diabetes is claiming more victims with every passing day. India harbours more than 34 million diabetics. TW tells you all about Diabetes and its prevention

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India is shining in the new millennium! Yes, but a dubious distinction has also been added to the list of its advances. India has become the world capital of diabetes by harbouring more than 34 million diabetics. Diabetes affects 5-6% of the world's adult population and claims as many lives as HIV/AIDS per year. Globally, two people develop diabetes every 10 seconds. Yet the efforts done to curtail its ferocity are miniscule in India at both the centre and state level.

What is diabetes?

When the blood sugar level becomes abnormally high the extra glucose in the blood cannot be utilized as a fuel. This condition is called diabetes. This may be due to a deficiency of the hormone insulin secreted by the beta cells of the pancreas (Type 1 diabetes) or due to a decrease in the efficiency of the insulin already present (insulin resistance) or both as occurs in Type 2 diabetes.

Type 2 Diabetes is the most common type of diabetes in adults over the age of 35.

What causes diabetes?

What is particularly a matter of great concern for us is that it is also becoming more common in over weight pre-teens and teenagers. Diabetes is more common in Asians due to their genetic predisposition. It is often called 'disease of lifestyles'. For thousands of years in the past, people by necessity were very active and used to live in scarci-



ty of food. We now live in a world of automobile travel, television, computers and fast food (be it Indian 'desi' or western). High calorie convenience foods and sugar rich drinks are available in abundance to a much larger population now. The main physical activity many people do is walking from their vehicle into their workplace or school.

By default most of Indians are bound to have diabetes due to our genetic background. Diabetes is also increasing in rural areas. Diabetes can lead to a number of complications including heart disease, stroke, eye disease (retinopathy), kidney disease, impotency, foot problems leading to limb loss and neuropathy. Most of these complications

can be prevented by keeping good sugar control along with taking care of the lipids, BP and weight.

How to control it?

The key to success in diabetes is lifestyle modification. Many of the people with the best controlled diabetes are those who exercise regularly.

The Diabetes Prevention programme (DPP) studied 3,234 people and concluded that 30 minutes of activity per day combined with a low fat diet reduces the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by over half (58%). One should plan his exercises in consultation with the doctor, as the degree and type of exercise may vary from person to person.

The diet to follow...

The diet for a diabetic is not very different from a normal healthy diet for anyone. The calorie content depends on your level of activity and weight.

■ The fat content should not exceed 20-25% (which comes from ghee, oil, butter, milk, egg, meat). Of this only a third should come from saturated fats.

BENEFITS OF REGULAR EXERCISE

- ◆ Controls sugar, cholesterol, weight, blood pressure.
- ◆ Builds muscles which gives strength and improve insulin sensitivity.
- ◆ Prevents obesity, osteoporosis and heart disease.
- ◆ Increases the good or the protective cholesterol, HDL.
- ◆ Gives a feeling of well being.
- ◆ Improves sleep.

■ Carbohydrates should form about 60% of the total calories. Among the cereals all can be eaten but a mixture of wheat, chana and joa may work better due to its high fibre content.

■ Fruits can be eaten in moderation like papaya, melon, apple, orange, guava, pomegranate. Avoid calorie dense and very sweet fruits like ripen banana, mango, chiko, grapes.

■ Green vegetables, salads, butter milk can be consumed ad libidum.

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