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# Reverse your diabetes

**Dr Nandita Shah**, founder of SHARAN, believes that complete change in one's eating habits, coupled with exercise, is all that is needed to get sugar levels under control, and she can prove it!

**M**ost people with diabetes are given the same advice – to cut down carbohydrates, cut out sugars, get more exercise, and take medications or insulin. Patients are expected to make this a lifelong regimen. Everyone knows that this does not cure diabetes, yet are willing to follow the advice. There is comfort in doing what everybody else does.

Is there any other way? Dr Nandita Shah, founder of SHARAN thinks so. "In order to reverse, or solve any problem, one needs to find the cause and eliminate it. Sugar is not the cause of diabetes, so no amount of cutting

of sugar and carbohydrates can reverse (cure) diabetes. High blood sugar is the result of diabetes, which in turn is the result of insulin resistance, or lack of insulin." She answers some frequently asked questions:

**Why does the body suddenly stop producing insulin? Why do the cells develop resistance?**

Type 2 diabetes is mainly the result of insulin resistance. It has been scientifically proven through the work of Dr Neal Barnard, Dr. T. Colin Campbell, Dr John McDougall, and Dr Gabriel Cousens among others, that by eating the right foods, diabetes can not only be prevented but also effectively reversed. Their research shows that our modern lifestyle, and consumption of animal products, processed foods, and

high amounts of fat, may result in diabetes, and that insulin resistance is the result of accumulation of fat inside muscle cells.

To reverse diabetes, all that has to be done is to minimise the amount of fat in the diet. This causes a drop in the fat inside muscle cells, resulting in increased insulin sensitivity. Now the blood sugar is automatically controlled.

### Why do most doctors not advise this and instead advise carbohydrate reduction?

There are several reasons. The first – many may not have this information. It is not in the textbooks, nor is it taught in colleges. Not all doctors read new research, and few test it for themselves. As in most other fields today, the practice of medicine too has been corporatised. There is no money in real health, and most people want a quick fix, little realising that only they can heal a lifestyle disease. Many are unwilling to change.

### What changes are required?

SHARAN conducted a pilot 21-day residential reversal programme, where participants were advised a fully plant-based diet. This means no external fat was used – no oil, butter, or ghee; and also no animal products. All animal products, even the leanest chicken or fish, and especially dairy, are full of fat. Comparatively plants contain little fat, but they do contain a lot of fibre. A low-fat high-fibre diet is required to reverse type 2 diabetes.

### Can one really live on such a diet lifelong?

I have been doing this for the past 27 years. It is not a deprivation, the food is so good! It makes the food that most people eat look unappetising. SHARAN programmes help make people aware that diabetes can be reversed, while providing wonderful food. We have one-day seminars, and cooking classes. Periodically we conduct another 21-day reversal programme, where people can learn all the benefits of a fully plant-based diet, including how to cook it, and how good it is. They are subjected to a whole battery of lab reports at the beginning, and at the end, along with tests every day to

monitor improvement. As their values improve, medications are cut down. Participants are given all the knowledge necessary to make and keep the changes required to be disease-free.

### What else does it heal and can anyone try this?

Diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and obesity, are lifestyle diseases that can be reversed with the same diet. Diabetics will find relief in many other areas as well. SHARAN's goal is to wipe out diabetes from the face of India. Amongst my earliest patients was a 70-year-old man who had been diabetic for 30 years. He came not because of diabetes, but because of the complications. He was losing his vision and had neuropathy. Despite medications, his sugar was not controlled. His fasting blood sugar was 222. Within two weeks of stopping the dairy in his vegetarian diet, his blood sugar dropped to 88! A young man of 21 had been told by his doctor that he would have to take insulin lifelong. He was taking three injections of insulin a day. Within just two weeks, he was off all insulin, and had normal blood sugar levels! Many have experienced the magic of a fully plant-based diet, not just the miraculous effects on health, but also the changes in the state of mind, energy, and zest for life. SHARAN hopes that many more people will benefit from this simple way of reversing diabetes

### Try it!

If you want to do it too, how do you begin? Here is a step-by-step guide.

**Step 1. Learning and preparation:** Doing anything new requires some learning. Get yourself some recipes which use fully plant-based foods, and practise making dishes you will like. Read up on healthy vegan cooking. You can find more help on the website

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Dr Nandita Shah teaches the benefits of plant-based cooking

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**Step 2. Where to shop:** Go to the health food store and try new foods. Learn how to make wonderful salads and where to buy all the ingredients.

**Step 3. What to eat:** Make a list of all the dishes you could have for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. Remember, a plant-based diet makes you will feel light and energetic, but in the beginning when this feeling is new, you will feel hungry. The good news is that you can eat as much as you want!

**Step 4. Get all your lab reports including**

1. CBC, ESR
2. Routine stool
3. Routine urine
4. Liver function tests
5. Kidney function tests
6. Lipid profile
7. Thyroid function tests
8. Blood pressure
9. Fasting blood sugar
10. ECG
11. Vit B12 and Vit D levels
12. Height and Weight
13. PPBS and HBA1C

**Step 5. Get support.** Do it with a friend or a family member. Use each other to dissuade you from falling off the wagon. Pledge to keep each other company for 21 days.

**Step 6. Cleansing:** Once you are ready, throw out everything that does not fit into your new regimen. Get rid of all the animal products – cheese, butter, paneer, curds, milk, eggs, meat, fish, and fowl, and all the refined products such as sugar, oil, polished rice, white flour, and juices. Once you have done this cleansing, you can begin to think clearly.

**Step 8. Shopping:** Buy plenty of fresh fruits

and vegetables. These will be the new staple. Buy some whole grains, nuts, and seeds. And begin!

**Step 9. Remember to be consistent.** No exceptions. Plan for 21 days, and not more. You are not pledging for a whole lifetime, it is just three weeks, and you can do it. It takes at least 21 days to change a habit, so it is most important that you stick it out. Once you have reached your goal you can decide if you would like to do it longer.

**Step 10. Check your blood sugar levels regularly.** If on insulin, it is important to check the blood sugar levels every day and even several times a day. When the levels fall, it is important to cut down the units of insulin. If one is on medication it is still important to check the blood sugar levels frequently, at least every few days or every week. As the results improve, cut down the medications with the help of your doctor.

**What do you need to do to reverse diabetes?**

- Eat only whole, unprocessed foods
  - Eat only plant-based foods
  - Learn how to cook in a way that is delicious and healing
  - Check Vitamin B12 levels and supplement if needed
  - Check Vitamin D levels and supplement if needed
  - Keep checking blood sugar levels, and cut down medications when needed
- Hypoglycaemia is more dangerous than hyperglycaemia

**This doctor did it himself**

Dr Suketu Shah, a general and laparoscopic surgeon at BCJ Hospital & Asha Parekh Research Centre, Mumbai, says, “I am their trustee and chief executive. Being a doctor it was evident to me that this method could work and was risk free. Since June 2011, I have been following these dietary principles. I also attended the health retreat at Swaswara Resort, Gokarna. I reversed diabetes, hypertension, and obesity in four months, and am leading a healthy life now without any medications. I would like to spread this message through our hospital as well.”



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