

WELLNESS

Reversing diabetes with Dr Nandita Shah: Fat, not sugar, is enemy

Discover why fat, not sugar, is the real culprit behind insulin resistance. Then, reverse diabetes naturally with whole, plant-based foods. No medicines, no myths - just healing, says Dr Nandita Shah.

by Parveen Chopra | April 7, 2025 | 0 comments



Dr. Nandita Shah, founder of [SHARAN](#) (Sanctuary for Health and Reconnection to Animals and Nature), is a pioneer in holistic healing, advocating that food is medicine. A recipient of the Nari Shakti Puraskar, India's highest civilian honor for women, she has empowered over 100,000 people to reverse chronic diseases through a plant-based lifestyle. Originally trained as a homeopath, she overcame Guillain-Barré Syndrome (which made her paralyzed) naturally, reinforcing her belief in the body's ability to heal.

Inspired by holistic health experts like [Dr. Dean Ornish](#) and Dr. Neal Barnard, her bestselling book 'Reversing Diabetes in 21 Days' and workshops in India and abroad continue to drive a health revolution that connects human well-being, animal compassion, and planetary sustainability. She lives in Auroville in South India, where she moved from Mumbai many years ago.

Plant Powered Metro New York (PPMNY), in collaboration with World Vegan Vision (WVV), recently hosted a talk by Dr Shah in Hicksville, New York. The following report is based on that talk.

Diabetes isn't just about high blood sugar – it's about insulin resistance. Yet, treatments often focus on cutting sugar rather than addressing the root cause. As Dr. Shah of SHARAN explains, "Nobody got better that way, right? Sugar is not the cause of diabetes; high blood sugar is a result of diabetes." At SHARAN's 21-day retreats, participants experience how a whole-food, plant-based lifestyle restores health – they even enjoy mangoes while blood sugar levels drop. Right nutrition, not restriction, is the key to healing.

In her talk peppered with PPT charts, Dr Shah also shared case histories of her two patients – Arun and Sheela, who battled diabetes and other chronic conditions and were relying on multiple medications. But with SHARAN's plant-based approach, their lives transformed. Arun reversed his diabetes in just 21 days, dropping all medications and losing weight. Sheela, after 30 years of illness, saw her cholesterol, acidity, and blood pressure meds vanish within weeks. Their journeys prove that true healing isn't about managing symptoms – it's about addressing the root cause with food and lifestyle changes.

The Hidden Truth About Fat, Hormones, and Disease

What's Really Causing Insulin Resistance?

- Fat, not sugar, is the real culprit behind insulin resistance.
- Animal products – meat, milk, cheese, butter, ghee – are loaded with fat and zero fiber.
- Plant-based fats like peanuts, coconut, and avocados don't behave the same way. Why? Because fiber holds onto fat and prevents it from going quickly into the bloodstream.

The Hormonal Chaos We're Creating

Hormonal disorders – PCOS (Polycystic ovary syndrome), thyroid issues, early puberty, infertility, menopausal problems, prostate

enlargement, and hormone-related cancers – are on the rise.

Why?

- Our hormones are controlled by the pituitary gland. When one goes out of balance, others follow.
- Animal products disrupt our hormones. Meat and dairy come from animals that naturally produce the same hormones we do, leading to unintended hormone intake.



In her programs, Dr Nandita Shah clarifies that excess fat and refined carbs cause diabetes, not sugar. Keto doesn't reverse it, and medications only manage it. The true reversal comes from diet and lifestyle changes.

The Bigger Picture: Rebalancing Our Health

“Even if you're thin, you can have fat in your muscle cells. It's not about weight – it's about what's inside,” Dr Shah avers.

To reverse disease, we must remove excess fat, restore fiber intake, and eliminate unnecessary hormones from our diet.

Healing begins not by treating symptoms, but by addressing the root causes.

Dr Shah asks rhetorically – What were we designed to eat by nature?

“If we eat only whole plants, we will never have a problem,” she says.

Key Causes of Disease Beyond Diet

- **Stress & Medications:** Both can impact blood sugar and hormonal balance.
- **Lack of Exercise & Vitamin D:** Vitamin D is actually a hormone, and an imbalance can trigger various health issues.
- **Tea, Coffee, Alcohol, Tobacco:** These are stimulants that artificially raise blood sugar and blood pressure. Eliminating them naturally stabilizes glucose levels.

Nature’s Clues: Understanding Our Natural Diet

Dr. Shah challenges us to reflect on what we were designed to eat.

- **Meat & Dairy:** If you saw a chicken or cow in nature, would your mouth water? No way. Unlike true carnivores, humans lack the instinct or ability to tear into raw flesh.
- **Grains like Wheat & Rice:** Do we crave them in their raw form? No. Only after heavy processing do they become palatable.
- **Nuts & Seeds:** Have you ever tried cracking open a walnut, almond, or pistachio with your bare hands? Nature has made them difficult to access, indicating they should be eaten in moderation – no more than 10 nuts a day.
- **Honey:** A beehive does not make our mouths water. Honey contains no fiber, making it an unnatural choice for human consumption.
- **Sugarcane:** In its whole form, with fiber intact, it’s difficult to overconsume. Refined sugar, however, removes fiber and disrupts our metabolism.

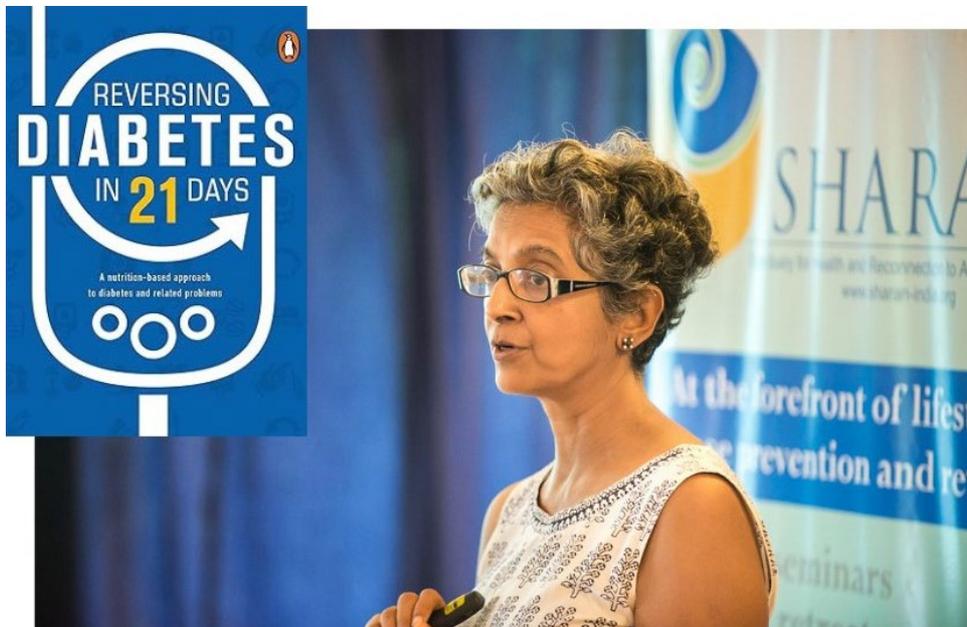
Nature has built protective mechanisms into real food – fiber, shells, and tough exteriors – to regulate how much we eat. Wherever there’s too much sugar, nature has put in a lot of fiber. Wherever there’s too much fat, nature has put in a lot of fiber. Processed foods strip away these natural safeguards, leading to overconsumption and disease.

By returning to whole, plant-based foods, we align with what our bodies were designed for – allowing health to flourish effortlessly.

Takeaways

1. Refined foods are the problem – Fiber removal from sugarcane, grains, and oils disrupts metabolism.
2. Whole foods are the solution – Choose whole grains, lentils, and whole fruits over juices.
3. Healthy fats in whole form – Eat nuts, seeds, and avocados; avoid refined oils.
4. Natural over artificial sweeteners – Opt for dates and raisins; avoid processed sugars.
5. Hidden chemical and medication risks – Meat, dairy, steroids, and certain medicines disrupt hormones and blood sugar.

Bottom line: Heal naturally – eat whole, fiber-rich foods, avoid chemicals,



Through her bestselling book '[Reversing Diabetes in 21 Days](#)' and workshops in India and abroad, Dr Shah connects human well-being, animal compassion, and planetary sustainability.

Rethinking Dairy, Chemicals, and What We Eat

We've been told dairy is essential for health, but the truth is far different. Dairy contains Insulin-Like Growth Factor (IGF-1), a hormone that disrupts insulin function and contributes to metabolic issues. Despite the marketing, many people unknowingly suffer from insulin resistance and hormonal imbalances from dairy consumption.

No animal drinks milk beyond infancy, yet humans continue to consume milk from cows and other mammals, often believing it strengthens bones. However, science shows that many are lactose intolerant or affected by inflammation, whether or not they feel discomfort.

Even organic milk, though free from antibiotics and hormones, still contains natural hormones and contributes to health problems. Yogurt, often praised for gut health, may not be as beneficial as advertised. Overconsumption of the same probiotic strains can imbalance gut bacteria. Instead, plant-based probiotics from fermented foods like kimchi and sauerkraut are better alternatives.

Additionally, everyday products like cleaners and plastics contain hormone-disrupting chemicals that affect our health. Switching to natural cleaners like vinegar, baking soda, and soap nuts can reduce toxin exposure and promote a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle.

So, What Do We Eat?

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by all this information. But just remember the simple advice: return to whole, unprocessed, plant-based foods.

- Grains: Swap white rice for brown, black, or red rice. Choose whole lentils over skinned ones.
- Fruits and vegetables: Eat them in their natural form – skip the fruit juices.
- Healthy Fats: Choose avocados, nuts (in moderation), seeds, and whole coconut instead of extracted oils.
- Natural Sweeteners: Use dates, raisins, and whole fruits rather than sugar, jaggery, honey, or artificial sweeteners.
- Fermented Foods: Instead of dairy-based probiotics, include kimchi,

sauerkraut, and homemade pickles in your diet.

The more we align our choices with nature, the healthier we become – not just physically, but mentally and emotionally too.

After all, as the saying goes, “Nature doesn’t make mistakes – only we do.”

The Hidden Impact of Stress and Dairy

Do you know that we experience emotions through hormones? Food and emotions are deeply connected. Stress triggers cortisol and adrenaline, while happiness boosts serotonin and dopamine. But what if we’re consuming stress through our food?

Milk from distressed, artificially inseminated cows contains cortisol and adrenaline, which we unknowingly ingest, fueling our own stress cycle. Stress isn’t just emotional – it’s physiological, influenced by diet, sleep, and toxins. Breaking the cycle requires a holistic approach: plant-based foods, rest, and movement.

The 5-Point Plan for a Healthier Life

SHARAN’s five-point plan offers a clear, sustainable approach to reclaiming health:

1. A Plant-Based Diet – Free from animal products, dairy, and refined foods.
2. All Organic – Reducing exposure to pesticides and chemicals.
3. Vitamin B12 & Vitamin D – Ensuring adequate levels for metabolic and hormonal balance.
4. Eliminating Chemicals – Reducing personal care and household toxins.
5. Sustainable Habits – Making long-term, enjoyable changes rather than quick fixes.



Once we remove the distractions of processed foods, artificial sweeteners, and animal products, eating healthy becomes simple. It's about eating real food, resting well, and moving joyfully.

A Sample Daily Menu for a Balanced Life

Making changes in your diet might seem overwhelming, but once you have the right recipes and alternatives, it becomes second nature. Here's a simple, balanced approach to daily meals:

Morning Rituals (No Tea or Coffee!)

- Start the day with water or water infused with lemon, citrus or herbs.
- If you cannot do without tea or coffee, replace with barley coffee or rooibos tea

Breakfast: Green Smoothie & Fruit

- A nutrient-packed green smoothie filled with leafy greens and fruit.
- Fresh fruit for fiber and hydration.

Mid-Morning Snack (if Hungry)

- A whole grain toast with avocado, hummus, or tomato and cucumber.

- Scrambled tofu with vegetables instead of eggs.
- Traditional Indian snacks made with whole grains and no refined oils.

Lunch: A Balanced Plate

- One-fourth of the meal should be raw salad
- One-fourth can be whole grains (brown rice, quinoa, millet, or whole-grain pasta).
- The rest should be lentils, beans, and cooked vegetables.

Some delicious meal ideas

- Whole-grain pasta with homemade sauce, veggies, and a salad.
- Soup, salad, and whole-grain toast.
- Indian meals with lentils, whole grains, and plenty of vegetables.

Evening snack (optional)

A green smoothie, fruit, or Indian-style *chaat* made with sprouts, chickpeas, or sweet potatoes.

Dinner

Similar to lunch, for variety, perhaps a different grain or a different preparation method. Batch cooking can make this process easier.



Dr Nandita Shah gave a talk in Hicksville, NY, organized by the World Vegan Vision led by Rakesh Bhargava and Plant Powered Metro New York

Simplicity is the Key

Once we remove the distractions of processed foods, artificial sweeteners, and animal products, eating healthy becomes simple. It's about eating real food, resting well, and moving joyfully.

When it comes to food, the goal isn't to restrict ourselves but to enjoy delicious, wholesome meals that nourish the body. Whether you prefer Indian food – salad, roti or rice, and vegetables – or Mediterranean flavors like baked falafel with pita, tahini, and hummus, the choices are abundant. The key is to embrace plant-based, whole-food options that help reverse diabetes naturally.

- *Edited by Navni Chawla*

To get more information about SHARAN's 21-Day Health Retreat conducted at Gokarna, Karnataka, or their online Diabetes Reversal Program, check out: <https://sharan-india.org/> The website has compiled over 600 healthy and wholesome recipes, offered free.

WHOLE FOODS

DIABETES MYTHS

DAIRY-FREE

HEALTHY LIVING

DR NANDITA SHAH

SHARAN

PLANT-BASED DIET