

Reversing Diabetes

Did you know that diabetes can be reversed? Dr. Nandita Shah of Sharan says this is possible, if individuals make the right lifestyle choices and sustain them, beginning with eating plant-based foods.

Diabetics often submit themselves to a life of medication, blood tests and a diet devoid of flavour that they have to eat nonetheless. Just imagine the delight on their faces if you could tell them they can bring the flavour back on their palate by making the right food choices? And imagine their further delight when you tell them that they can even reverse their diabetes?

Diabetics often find their weight gradually going up along with fluctuating blood sugar levels. They then have to resort to higher doses of medication, and deal with its affiliated complications. Even when they manage to keep their blood sugar levels in check, they could suffer from a variety of ailments like neuropathies, loss of vision, kidney failures, heart attacks or gangrene.

Most doctors advise diabetics to cut down carbohydrates, stop having sugar in their meals and exercise more. Of course, they also have to keep taking insulin and other medications, which can be a limiting factor in their lives.



Dr. Neal Barnard, Adjunct Associate Professor of Medicine at George Washington University of Medicine and President of the non-profit Physicians Committee of Responsible Medicine, researched ways to reverse diabetes. He wrote about his findings in the book 'Dr. Neal Barnard's Programme for Reversing Diabetes.'

UNDERSTANDING INSULIN RESISTANCE

Diabetes is caused when the body either produces insufficient amount of insulin (Type 1) or none at all (Type 2). If we understand what stops the body from producing the requisite amount of insulin and remove this cause we will be successful in reversing diabetes.

The muscle cells in our body have receptors for insulin, allowing glucose to enter. This glucose is used by the cell to generate energy for all the vital functions. In diabetics, these insulin receptors become resistant and do not allow the glucose to enter. The result is a concentration of glucose in the blood stream, which is flushed out of the body during urination. The muscles do not have enough energy for daily activities, causing weakness. Doctors advise these patients to take anti-diabetic drugs, which temporarily reduce the insulin resistance. However, since the problem is inherently present; the latent diabetes is never cured.

Dr. Neal has found that the cause of insulin resistance is fat in the muscle cells (intramyocellular lipids) while reduces the sensitivity of receptors to insulin. The other cause could be the 'Insulin-like growth factor' present in milk, which is similar to insulin and blocks the receptors. It is basically similar to a situation when you're trying to open a lock with the wrong key. The situation is worse because the wrong key is stuck and you cannot use the right key either. The blocked receptors in our body do not let muscle cells use the glucose, leading to increased sugar levels.

According to research, infants who are fed animal milk at an early age instead of their mother's milk are more likely to develop Type I diabetes. In some people, the protein in the cow's milk stimulates production of antibodies, which are basically fighter proteins produced by the immune system with the intention of fighting the proteins



from milk. However, since pancreatic cells are structurally similar to the milk proteins, these antibodies destroy the pancreatic cells instead. This reduces the insulin-producing capacity of these cells leading to Type 1 diabetes.

Other factors like certain chemicals or medications can reduce this capacity too. Although some cases of type 1 diabetes cannot be reversed, most cases can be reversed over a period of time, resulting in a reduction in or altogether elimination of insulin requirement.

REVERSING DIABETES

There are some ways to build up the body's ability to fight insulin resistance. The first thing to do is take a close look at what you are putting into your body. Avoid addictive foods like tea, coffee, alcohol, sugar and reduce salt intake. Drink plenty of water, which will keep your muscles and organs well hydrated.

Eat whole plant foods, which are packed with fiber, vitamins and minerals. Avoid animal products,

since they are high on fat, including milk. Stay away from refined products like white rice, white flour, oil, sugar and processed foods. Eat organic foods, since pesticides used in conventional farming methods can cause diabetes.

Try to get lot of plenty of Vitamin D by going for a walk or run in the early morning. Get plenty of sleep, especially at a stretch in the night. Although the most important change is nutritional, plenty of fresh air, reducing chemical pollutants, good exercise, exposure to sunshine, and stress reduction go a long way in healing diabetes.

Most people come up with excuses for not following the lifestyle prescribed when they aren't at home or when they travel. Controlling and later reversing diabetes is all in the mind. Pledge yourself to a healthy lifestyle and make a commitment to a plant-based diet for at least a month. The first month is most crucial – after that your body will adapt to the altered lifestyle more easily. ■

Red Rice Idli

These pretty pink colored idlis are surprisingly tasty, filling and healthy. Once you get hooked to these, the regular white rice idlis might no longer appeal to you.

{ INGREDIENTS }

4 cups unpolished red rice
1 cup whole (black) urad dal

1 tsp fenugreek seeds
Salt to taste

{ METHOD }

1. Separately soak the red rice and the urad dal for 6-8 hours.
2. Soak 1 teaspoon of fenugreek seeds either with the rice or dal. Add salt to taste.
3. Grind the soaked rice in the blender till you get a slightly coarse, but slightly smooth paste.
4. Pour into a large bowl.
5. Grind the soaked urad dal in the blender till very smooth and mix with the rice paste.
6. Keep this mixture in a cool dry place to ferment for 8-12 hours.
7. Grease the idli moulds with some ghee and then pour the batter into it.
8. Place in an idli steamer and steam for sometime till the idli is ready.
9. Serve warm with some coconut chutney.

Recipe courtesy: Sharan



Steamed Mixed Vegetables in Red Gravy

You can use any steamed vegetables of your choice to make this filling and wholesome dish.

{ INGREDIENTS }

300 gm cauliflower
50 gm potato
½ cup green peas
1 carrot
200 gm French beans

FOR GRAVY
3 tomatoes
1 cup ground cashew nuts
2 tsp sesame oil
1 tsp cumin seeds
30 gm ginger, grated
1 green chilly, cut long

1 tsp red chili powder
¼ tsp haldi
1 tsp garam masala
1 tsp coriander-cumin powder
Salt, as per taste

{ METHOD }

1. Cut all vegetables in medium sized cubes and steam them.
2. Puree the tomatoes and cashew nuts in a blender.
3. Take a pan and sauté the cumin seeds, ginger and green chillies.
4. Add the tomato puree. After 5 minutes, mix the chili powder, garam masala, coriander cumin powder and salt.
5. Stir until the gravy is ready. Add all the vegetables and let it cook for 5 minutes.
6. Serve with multigrain rotis or cooked brown rice.

Recipe courtesy: Sharan

