

## Ayurveda Guidelines for Diabetes Management

Why Ayurveda ? because all diabetics are not similar, as we see they respond differently for the same set of medications or therapies. And the reason is they may be suffering from either *Vaata* type of diabetes caused by excessive stress, degeneration or genetic factors, the *Pitta* type caused by inflammation and metabolic factors, or the *Kapha* type due to excessive nourishment, lethargy, inactivity, or autoimmune factors. So, if the cause is different, the treatment necessarily needs to be different and customized too. Managing a stress induced diabetes with unpalatable diet, or that triggered by obesity and inactivity by following de-stressing methods like meditation and rest is seemingly a mismatch and clinically conflicting.

Pioneering *Ayurvedacharyas* like Charaka and Sushruta systematically documented in their Samhitaas how a multitude of triggering factors cause *Madhumeha* – Diabetes, and how this one single disorder causes a multitude of diseases if left untreated or mismanaged. This is a historical first in the world of recorded clinical medicine.

The following is a summary of simple yet practical and effective diet, lifestyle and home remedies to manage diabetes.

### **Diet**

- Often the next meal is not uncertain, so regularize mealtimes, do not over eat or eat in a hurried manner. Chew thoroughly, as digestion of sugars and starch starts in the mouth.
- Surprisingly, most vegetables and legumes that geographically are of Indian origin are known to have a low glycemic index. Raw banana, ash gourd, bottle gourd, ridged gourd, karela, cucumber, pumpkin, onion, garlic, turnip, yams, lemon, eggplant, methi leaves, radish, moringa, mung dal, horse gram, masur, channa and Bengal gram are some of them.
- Cereals should be preferably stored for a year before consuming. Older the grains, lesser their influence on blood sugar, if you are unsure of how old the rice is, just roast it well for a minute or two before cooking.
- 450 grams of barley can be added in a kilo of wheat to make atta for rotis, this is a simple yet effective high fiber way to manage diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, triglycerides and constipation.
- A glass of dilute buttermilk seasoned with ginger, pepper, cumin, asafetida and saindhav salt assists digestion.
- Fruits of kaala jamun, amalaki, pomegranate, citrus varieties and bilva can be taken in moderation.

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- Breakfast can comprise of ragi, oats, whole wheat breads, chiwra or rava upma and drinking a glass of channa satttu or barley satttu or malted ragi in spiced buttermilk.
- Brown rice or whole wheat is preferred to polished rice, maida or refined foods.
- Manage hunger with a dry, tasty yet therapeutic puffed rice, khoee, (popped rice) or taal makana preparation or cucumber and lemon based mildly spiced salads.

### **Lifestyle factors**

- Regular exercise or sports and games regimen ranging from simple brisk morning walks to strenuous ones like cycling, wrestling, swimming, squash, tennis, hiking etc are highly supportive to managing diabetes.
- Pranayamas of various types or dynamic Yogaasanas like 12 sets of Surya Namaskara, Pavanamuktasana are wonderful ways to maintain overall fitness, emotional balance and inner peace.
- Do away with a monotonous routine; there are so many exciting ways to manage diabetes.

### **Herbs and Spices**

- Methi, amalaki, turmeric, cinnamon, nigella seeds, neem, ginger, karela, triphala, guduchi, asafetida and mustard are found to very effective because of their proven anti-inflammatory, immune-modulatory or blood glucose lowering properties.

### **Avoid**

- The list of things to avoid is endless; so just try to avoid things that are not mentioned in the diet and lifestyle recommendations at least till the blood glucose readings touch the normal levels.

High blood glucose is an effect not the cause, focus on eliminating the root cause, taking medicines regularly or not eating sweets is just one of the many pre-requisites to manage diabetes effectively. Remember, diabetes promotes vascular disorders that affect the three Vitals or *Tri Marmas* – the heart, brain and kidneys. So help yourself, spare no efforts, self-motivation and commitment to follow a healthy active routine is the best way to counter diabetes.

*Article authored by physicians of Prasida Ayurveda Clinic, published in Times of India 18<sup>th</sup> Nov 2012 on World Diabetes day*

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