

Importance of Diet in Managing NCDs

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Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are medical conditions that can be defined as non-infectious or non-transmissible among people. NCDs are chronic diseases which last for long periods of time and progress slowly. The most common NCDs are heart diseases, stroke, cancers, respiratory diseases and diabetes. The World Health Organization reports NCDs to be the leading cause of death in the world, representing over 60% of all deaths. In India, 60% of deaths were due to NCDs in 2013-2014 (WHO).

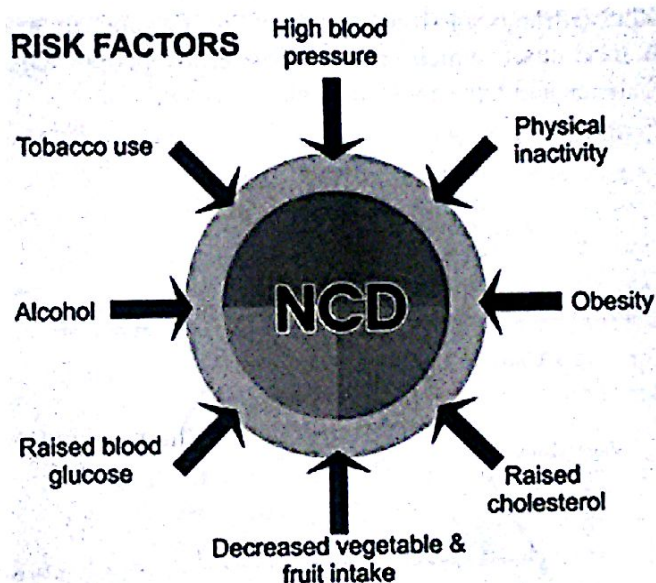
What is Diabetes?

The increase of Sugar levels in the blood is called Diabetes. Diabetes is due to either the pancreas not producing enough insulin, or the cells of the body not responding properly to the insulin produced.

What is Hypertension?

When blood exerts too much pressure on the walls of the blood vessels, it's called hypertension, or high blood pressure. Hypertension can lead to damaged organs as well as several illnesses, such as renal failure (kidney failure), heart failure, stroke, or heart attack.

“These days due to the sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy eating patterns, more and more people get affected with NCDs. Due to unhealthy diets even children are becoming obese. To prevent the burden of NCDs there is a huge demand for the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities and mass media campaign. Government must take an active role in creating awareness to prevent the NCDs with the help of active NGOs working on health promotion.”



Symptoms of Diabetes and Hypertension

<i>Diabetes</i>	<i>Hypertension</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Excess thirst ◆ Dry mouth ◆ Frequent urination ◆ Excess hunger with loss of weight ◆ Drowsiness ◆ Blurred vision and Tiredness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Continuous headaches ◆ Breathing problem ◆ Dizziness ◆ Nausea ◆ Problems with vision ◆ Chest pains

Management of diabetes and hypertension often focus on regular medication and follow-up visits. While medicines play an important role in managing such conditions, lifestyle modification and healthy diet are also equally important. People with diabetes and/or hypertension should adopt a healthy lifestyle; they should

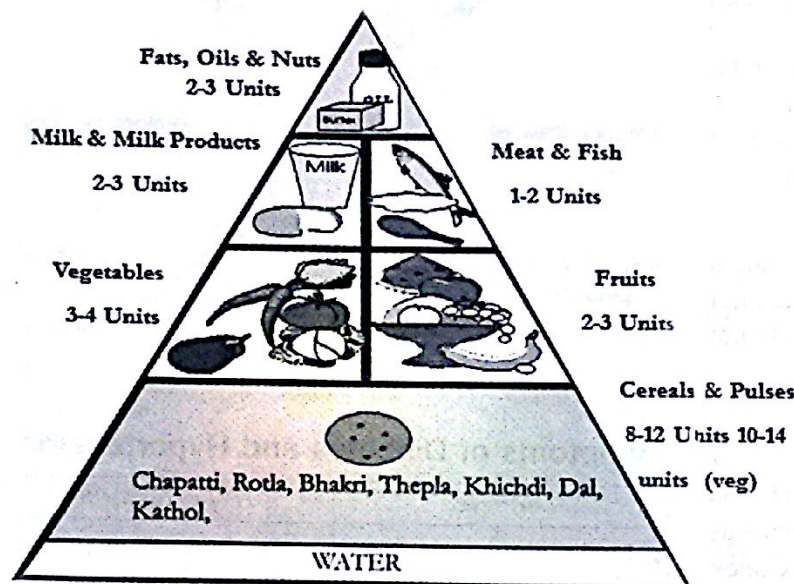
- Increase physical activity; try to decrease the weight

- through walking, exercising or practicing yoga
- Adopt a healthy diet; try to avoid eating junk foods and oily foods, eat enough green leaves and raw vegetables, except carrot
 - Avoid smoking and drinking
 - Conduct regular health check-ups; get eyes and kidneys checked

Importance of a balanced diet in managing diabetes and hypertension

A balanced diet is one which contains different types of foods in such quantities and proportions so that the need of calories, proteins, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients is adequately met. At the core of a balanced diet are foods that are high in vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients and low in unnecessary fats and sugars. A food chart, which can be followed by people with diabetes and hypertension, is given below:

Fruits:



Besides being a great source of nutrition, fruits make quick and tasty snacks. Choose fruits that are in season in your area—they are fresher and provide the most nutrients. People with diabetes should avoid Papaya, Apple, Grapes, and Banana

Vegetables:

Vegetables are primary sources of essential vitamins and minerals. Dark, leafy greens generally contain the most nutrition and can be eaten at every meal. Examples include spinach, kale, green beans, broccoli, and collard greens.

Proteins:

Meats and beans are primary sources of protein, which is essential for proper muscle and brain development. Lean, low-fat meats such as chicken, fish,

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and certain cuts of beef and pork are the best option. Removing the skin and trimming off any visible fat are easy ways to reduce the amount of fat and cholesterol in meats. Nuts and beans such as lentils, peas, almonds, sunflower seeds, and walnuts, are also good sources of protein.

Dairy:

Dairy products provide calcium, vitamin D, and other essential nutrients. However, they are also major sources of fat, so it is best to choose reduced-fat or fat-free cheeses, milk, and yogurt.

Oils:

Oils should be used sparingly. Opt for low-fat versions of products that contain oil, such as salad dressing and mayonnaise. Good oils such as olive oil, can replace fattier vegetable oil in your diet. Avoid foods that have been deep-fried in oil because they contain a large number of empty calories

NCDs are a major health problem in developing countries like India. However, the treatment of hypertension and diabetes is quite expensive and lifelong treatment is required once the person is diagnosed. For people in rural areas and slum dwellers, it is difficult to afford the medicine cost. Along with medicines, NCDs require lifestyle modifications. These days due to the sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy eating patterns, more and more people get affected with NCDs. Due to unhealthy diets even children are becoming obese. To prevent the burden of NCDs there is a huge demand for the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities and mass media campaign. Government must take an active role in creating awareness to prevent the NCDs with the help of active NGOs working on health promotion. ■

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