Too sweet

Guard against sugar addiction

SUGAR CAN BE addictive, but its excessive consumption can cause health problems. So, as much as you can, avoid being a sugar glut. Simran Saini, nutritionist and weight loss consultant, Fortis Hospital, explains the harmful effects of too much sugar:

• The daily recommended intake of sugar is not more than six teaspoons for women and nine teaspoons for men.

• Most of us consume too much sugar without realising it. It is well hidden in processed foods. A single can of cold drink has seven teaspoons of sugar. A large serving of cold drink can have as much as 44 teaspoons.

• Chocolates, pastries, candies, fast food, breakfast cereals, ice creams, canned fruit juices, soups, alcoholic drinks and desserts have very high amounts of sugar.

• Sugar has calories but none of the vitamins or minerals that our body needs.

• Excessive sugar accumulates in our bodies, causing health conditions like obesity, tooth decay, diabetes and an impaired immune system.

• Sugar can also result in diseases associated with metabolism like high cholesterol levels, insulin resistance and increased blood pressure.

• People with severe sugar addiction can opt for sugar substitutes as a safe alternative. These offer the same taste as sugar but with almost zero calories.

• Sugar substitutes are ideal for those suffering from diabetes, obesity and other health conditions. People who consume sugar substitutes are able to significantly reduce their calorie intake without feeling hungry. Stevia, aspartame, and sucralose are three sugar substitutes popular worldwide that are now available in India too

• It is important to reduce our daily consumption of sugar if we have to stay healthy and avoid serious medical disorders as we grow old. Sugar substitutes are a sweet but safe way to satisfy our sweet tooth without compromising on health. *IANS*

Pay close attention

Meditation helps improve sleep quality and lifestyle, finds research

REGULAR MEDITATION MAY improve sleep quality and also prevent insomnia among the older people, finds new research. Mindfulness meditation practices - in which people learn to pay better attention to what they are feeling physically and mentally from moment to moment - resulted in improved sleep quality for older adults with moderate sleep disturbance in a clinical trial.

"According to our findings, mindfulness meditation appears to have a role in addressing the prevalent burden of sleep problems among older adults," said David Black from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

Moderate sleep disturbances in older adults are associated with higher levels of fatigue, disturbed mood such as depressive symptoms and a reduced quality of life.

The researchers conducted the small clinical trial in Los Angeles in 2012 and their analysis included 49 individuals (average age 66).

The trial included 24 individuals who took part in a standardised mindful awareness practices (MAPs) intervention and 25 individuals who participated in a sleep hygiene education (SHE) intervention.

Participants in the MAPs group showed improvement compared to those in the SHE group.

The MAPs group also showed improvement as compared to the SHE group on secondary measures of symptoms of insomnia, depression, fatigue interference and its severity.

The article was published online by *JAMA Internal Medicine. IANS*

Clear Your Throat & Thought

Many clients complain of constant cough and cold problem. Some have even suffered from prolonged sinusitis all their lives. No amount of medicines and visits to the doctor brings relief. Many children also complain of the same problem. Either they are ill all the time or suffer from throat infections. Of course there are medical reasons for this and you must visit a doctor when unwell. But have you ever wondered why you have throat related problems again and again? Why is it that no amount of medicine is able to help you get better? To understand the reason for this problem, lets dig a bit deeper.

Chakras are moving vortexes of energy within our body that control our physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. Any disturbance in the chakra energy leads to physical ailments and emotional imbalance and vice versa.

The throat chakra is located in your Adam's apple, in the thyroid gland. This chakra controls your voice box, sinus, throat and nose area. On a subtle level it represents creativity, communication, your ability to express and your inner voice. This chakra is blue in colour and rotates at a high frequency. Traditionally this chakra was important as it controls the thyroid gland. This gland produces hormones responsible for energy levels and activity. Any disruption in this chakra directly impacts your throat and your energy levels. When you are unable to express yourself or are not confident while talking, this chakra is likely to be affected. Most people these days are not able to say what they want either at work place or at home. We are slowly becoming the generation that internalises more than it externalises. The more we remain quiet and are stopped from expressing – the more we have clogged energy in the throat. After prolonged periods of communication problem, people start having throat related problems and in extreme cases imbalance in the thyroid gland.

So the question is, how does one balance this chakra? The easiest and the most practical way is to start expressing yourself. Secondly maintain a journal to your thoughts. Joining a music class or taking up singing will also help. Painting or any creative activity where you have to express yourself is also highly recommended. This helps in pouring your emotions on canvas. Last but not the least, practice Bhamri Pranayama everyday. This breathing method in yoga, not only enhances throat chakra but also eliminates headaches and improves voice quality.

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