

Continued from page 1

in our dietary pattern over the years. On one hand we are eating unhealthy food, and on the other, we have sedentary lives, which directly increases lifestyle diseases," says Dr T Lomgava, director, National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad. "Due to this, we are struggling with the problem of under nutrition (38 per cent among children) and over nutrition among children."

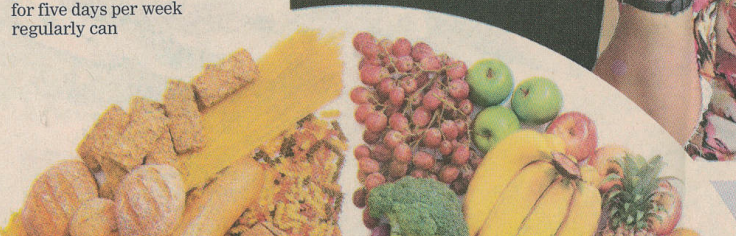
A few years ago, a study conducted by AIIMS, Delhi, revealed that children from the elite class suffer from over nutrition. They eat more fats and calories in the form of fast and processed food, but their intake of vitamins and micro nutrients are far less than required. A study in Vadodara's elite schools revealed that dietary practices and physical activities were found unhealthy among these children, who were overnourished. Another study stated that overnutrition is emerging as an epidemic in the country and may increase the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases when these children turn adults.

A consumer survey conducted by IMRB broke the myth that vegetarians are healthier than non-vegetarian. Almost half the participants surveyed were lifelong vegetarians, and yet the rates of obesity and cardiac disease were found similar to those among non-vegetarians. More vegetarians than non-vegetarians were diabetic. This was because vegetarians eat large amounts of high-glycaemic carbohydrates, potatoes and fried food, and frequently reuse cooking oil. Their diet does not include enough raw foods, salads and fruits, considered essential to a good vegetarian diet.



Dheera, now 57 kg
She weighed 92 kg and found it difficult to walk. She never realised that her gorging on burgers, parathas, aaloo tikki, oily food and sodas would slowly but surely make her obese and endanger her life. In just five to six years, a 45 kg Dheera shot up to 92 kg. She was just 18.

Studies indicate that eating foods high in sugar and fat changes the chemical activity of the brain, making it more dependent on such foods. When these foods are discontinued, it creates withdrawal symptoms, which can lead to inability in dealing with stress and make you depressed. It has also been proved that eating junk food for five days per week regularly can



Balanced Diet

quantity of at least 400 gm (or five daily servings with an average serving size of 80 gm, recommended by WHO) of fruits and vegetables. People, especially youngsters, are resorting to cheap and unhealthy food options that are mostly snacks. On an average, the Indian diet pattern is skewed towards cereals, and fruits and vegetables account for only 9 per cent of the total calorie intake (NSSO 2014). Their lifestyle is the topmost reason for their inability to meet the recommendation, the WHO study says. Lifestyle is a key reason for low



calories should come from complexed carbs

such as wheat, ragi, oats, etc., and 15-20 per cent from proteins such as dal, curd, paneer, milk. For non-vegetarians, egg, chicken, mutton and fish should comprise 20-25 per cent. Meals should include fruits.



Nikhil, now 84 kg
From Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, Nikhil weighed 145 kg when he was 17. "I consumed a litre of cold drinks every day. Burgers, pizzas and fried potatoes were my favourite foods," he says. Nikhil's obesity caused him respiratory problems, joint pain and borderline diabetes.



Dr T Lomgava
Director, National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad

"There has been a drastic change in our dietary pattern over the years. On one hand we are eating unhealthy food, and on the other, we have sedentary lifestyles, which directly increase lifestyle diseases."

consumption across all age groups but more so among the younger lot (18-35 years).

Losing 5-10 per cent of weight can reduce chances of developing heart disease and having a stroke. Increasing cases of diabetes, knee and joint problems are also directly linked to being overweight. Few know that consumption of fast food also hits our brain functioning. Excess consumption of trans fats in fried and processed foods can send mixed signals to the brain, which makes it difficult to process what and how much you have eaten and how hungry you are.

deteriorate memory.

Too much fatty food and sweets can substantially increase insulin levels and cause Type 2 Diabetes. With higher insulin levels, the brain stops responding to this hormone and becomes resistant to it. This can restrict our ability to think, recall or create memories.

"With an increasing per capita income, people have more purchasing power and now opt for easy and quick food. Opening of a number of fast food chains also provides easy options to have junk food. People new in cities prefer fast

food; so do working couples," adds Dr Lomgava.

India's fast food industry has doubled between 2013 and 2016, and is estimated to be worth \$1.12 billion. Unlike China, which saw a decline in fast food sales last year, India's market is



Dr G S Toteja
Head, Department of Nutrition, Indian Council of Medical Research



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Doctors advise a balanced diet with moderate regular exercise instead of spending more time in the gym

Snacks are low in protective nutrients such as minerals, vitamins and antioxidants; this increases our risk of developing metabolic abnormalities and obesity.

The right foundation to good health is to choose food products rich in nutrients with a balanced amount of nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, protein, carbohydrates and a little bit of fat as well.

Unfortunately, the concept has been changing. "Over the years, there is transmission in nutritional values. It's time to address problems related to our food habits and changing food patterns of food," says Dr G S Toteja, head, Department of Nutrition at Indian Council of Medical Research. "We need proper scientific data on food changing patterns in Indians to persuade the government to make strict rules on unhealthy food." In July 2014, the government increased taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages by 5 per cent to reduce their consumption.

expected to grow due to changing consumer preferences and large young population.

Experts say Indians need to change and improve their food habits. According to them, snacking is one of India's biggest health problems. While the world sits down for dinner in the evening after work, most urban Indians reach home between 6 and 8 p.m. and having tea with snacks. A survey by global information, data, and measurement company A C Nielsen reported that the highest consumption of unhealthy snacks such as biscuits, chips and namkeens takes place pre-dinner in India. The aftermath of eating high-carbohydrate and large meals late at night puts us at a hormonal disadvantage and favours easy fat deposition. Each tea break increases the consumption of added sugars.

To combat unhealthy eating habits, the government is considering raising taxes on junk food and sugary drinks through a 'fat tax'. An 11-member team constituted by the government has suggested that the money collected from these taxes should go to the health services. "FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) is working on mechanisms to regulate consumption of junk food," says Health Secretary C K Mishra, who is part of the team.

Indians are eating their way into death, blissfully unaware of the ticking bomb in them. They need to act fast on cutting down 'bad' food before they jump from the frying pan into the fire of deadly diseases.

Bariatric Surgery

A surgical option for overweight people to lose weight. The surgery is of four types: Laparoscopic Gastric Band surgery, Laparoscopic Vertical Sleeve Gastrectomy Gastric Bypass, and Bilopancreatic Diversion with Duodenal Switch. Weight loss is achieved by reducing the size of the stomach with a gastric band or through removal of a portion of the stomach (sleeve gastrectomy or biliopancreatic diversion with duodenal switch) or by resecting and re-routing the small intestine to a small stomach pouch (gastric bypass surgery).

