

# Chennai Express



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SATURDAY



Alia's triumph and SRK's magic

PG7

**ng Day**  
nursery rhyme 'Mary  
gn in 1846 to establish  
She was the founder  
Boston

**A TIRELESS CAMPAIGN**  
Her editorials in the *Magazine* and letters to President Lincoln resulted in Lincoln's proclamation in 1863, which designated the last Thursday of November as Thanksgiving Day



**A BOOK ON SLAVERY**  
In 1827, she published her first novel in the US under the title *Northwood: Or, Life North and South*. It made Hale one of the first novelists to write a book about slavery

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS**  
Hale advocated education, and ultimately women's entry into the work force. She supported play and physical education as important learning experiences for children

## HOW TO BATTLE THE BULGE

- On Anti Obesity Day, *City Express* takes a look at the malaise that seems to afflict more women in south India
- Experts say that better socio-economic conditions among urban people is one of the main causes of obesity among women

### STEPS TO WATCH YOU WEIGHT



Reduce sitting time slowly but steadily. Start by taking a break every hour, and eventually, reduce it to every 30 minutes.

Taking a few minutes to walk around and stretching can literally save your life. Do simple stretches throughout the day such as placing your hands on your lower back and stretching backwards.

At work, go drink some water and visit the restroom more often.

Park your car farther from your office and take the advantage of walking. Better still, walk home if that's a possibility.

Walk after eating your lunch. Stand while talking on the phone or eating meals.

Try a standing desk or treadmill desk at work.

Give yourself reminders to sit less. Making rules like walking during commercials when you're watching television also serve this purpose.

### ● Sanjana Chakraborty

**N**ovember 26, which is recognised as Anti Obesity Day is not to be confused with World Obesity Day, which falls on October 11. The latter is an annual campaign with the goal of stimulating and supporting practical actions that will help people achieve and maintain a healthy weight, while and reverse the global obesity crisis. The former, however, is a movement that began closer to home, vociferously campaigned by health and fitness venture

VLCC, and focusing more on it as a pandemic crisis.

While obesity does not discriminate, the Global Nutrition Report conducted this year assessed that a growing rate of overweight people in the country prevailed, resulting in high risk of diabetes and heart diseases in the country. Incidentally, India has also been ranked high on malnourishment,

paving way for extreme results based on the Body Mass Index (BMI) of most of the population. Women, particularly in south India, are the ones battling obesity more than men. *City Express* tries to find out what ails the population and why it continues.

India is recognised as a potpourri of all kinds of food. Travel a 100 km in any direction and you get cuisines and flavours that are completely different. Some are fried to the point they drip oil after every bite, while others are filled with masalas and spices. Basing this as one of the reasons, Dr Anbhezhi Subbarayan, an endocrinologist with Apollo Hospitals, believes that while the food in the country maybe delicious and tempting, a balanced intake is the need of the hour: "Food with fat and sugar tastes so much better and people tend to go with that, without thinking much about the health hazards. It's difficult to keep your intake in check if the food is so good," he opines.

Carbohydrates are consumed more in south Indian cuisine too. "You cannot say that obesity isn't rampant in rural areas, but

usually in urban areas it happens due to the lifestyle. The amount of calories you consume and what you burn to be balanced. It's easy to say that you eat less but it's not the same when you talk about the food you have actually consumed," he adds.

Dietitians and experts from VLCC Wellness Centre notice a pattern of why women fall prey to obesity more here. "Southern states in India have better socio-economic indicators than other states. In these states, female education is comparatively higher. Moreover, the proportion of women living below the poverty line is comparatively less in the south than the northern or eastern regions in India. So, having a favourable environment in these states, women can have a sedentary lifestyle, which may further lead to overweight or obesity," adds an expert.

But singling out food as the sole reason would seem unfair. Dr Shashikala, consultant diabetologist from Venkateswara Hospitals, highlights other possible reasons. "Food and lifestyle are factors, but so are hormones. With more fast food and oily foods now, lifestyles have changed drastically. Invariably, now you'll find most of the women suffering from Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)," she avers.

She also adds that irregular menstrual cycles result in weight gain. "Add to this, most women tend not to focus on their bodies after pregnancy. Citing reasons that they don't have time or have to take care of kids, women end up putting on weight more and it becomes difficult to lose it," she says.

Bearing this in mind, doctors however, vouch that there is hope. "While physical exercises such as going to gyms is an option, there are many who aren't aware of a simple technique called NEAT — Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis," says Subbarayan. "These are the little things you can do to counter obesity, especially when you have no time."

For example, when you read a book, you can do it standing or walking around. Or if you have the option of using the lift or staircase, opt for the latter. "Instead of relying on help, try doing your own day-to-day to activities such as washing, sweeping etc. These small little things go a long way and if you do it regularly, it makes a huge difference in the future," he adds.



Illustration  
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