



ACHIEVING AND PROMOTING HEALTHY LIFESTYLE BY SELF-MONITORING HABIT

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ABSTRACT

India is battling a full-blown health crisis. Lancet study should be treated as a warning to our policymakers. Research reveals a dangerously rapid epidemiological transition and a rising burden of non-communicable diseases. The country is far away from achieving its Sustainable Development Goals. Dismal infrastructure and the surging medical bills pushed 5.5 million Indians back to poverty last year. If the same scenario continues, India will miss its global nutrition targets set for 2025 and is ranked 145th among 195 countries in terms of accessibility and quality of healthcare. However, government spending on healthcare is still lower than the global average. To avoid the forthcoming threats & health crisis, we need to focus on preventing diseases than treating them. Solution to this problem is within our hands. Youth should develop good lifestyle health habits and grow up to be healthy citizens by self monitoring their health. Our strategy should be to require that all K-12(kindergarten - 12th grade) schools in India be Health Promoting Schools. Health Education is to be mandatory in every school and at every grade level. The Department of Education in each State and Union Territory should take on this challenge and make it a high priority.

KEYWORDS: *Health Crisis, Non-Communicable Diseases, Health Habits, Good Lifestyle, Self Monitoring.*

INTRODUCTION

The public healthcare system in India evolved due to a number of influences from the past 70 years, including British influence from the colonial period. The need for an efficient and effective public health system in India is large. Public health system across nations is a conglomeration of all organized activities that prevent disease, prolong life and promote health and efficiency of its people. Indian healthcare system has been historically dominated by provisioning of medical care and neglected public health. 20% of all maternal deaths and 25% of all child deaths in the world occur in India. 34 out of 1000 children are dead by the time they reach the age of 5. 58% of Indians are immunized in urban areas compared to only 39% in rural areas. Communicable disease is the cause of death for 53% of all deaths in India. Public health initiatives that affect people in all states, such as the National Health Mission, Ayushman Bharat, National Mental Health Program, are instilled by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. There are multiple systems set up in rural and urban areas of India including Primary Health Centers, Community Health Centers, Sub Centers, and Government Hospitals. These programmes must follow

the standards set by Indian Public Health Standards documents that are revised when needed.

Although we have above mentioned centers, food habits have played a major role even in the rise and fall of civilizations. The small habits that we have grown up hearing like, do not share glasses, “don’t go out on an empty stomach, do not chomp, do chewing multi times (depends on type of food - average chew 32times, hard food like nuts 40 times, fruits 10-14 times), do not talk while eating etc...are much more than good manners. In fact going back to some of these habits can magically impact our health.

FOOD HABITS TO ACHIEVE AND PROMOT HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

A healthy lifestyle is one which helps to keep and improve your health and well-being. There are many different things that you can do to live a healthy lifestyle, such as eating healthy, being physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, and managing your stress. However, a healthy lifestyle isn’t just about healthy eating and exercise, it also about taking care of the “whole you” – your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. And, that means taking care of you

from the inside. Even though there are many common ways to live a healthy lifestyle, actually doing it looks different for everyone, and means something different from one person to the next. Regardless of what you choose to do, living a healthy lifestyle is a key component to disease prevention, wellness, and longevity. Being mindful of your diet, physical activity and stress levels allows you to effectively balance all aspects of your life and the “whole you”. Below mentioned are some of the important things you can do to live a healthy lifestyle.

1. Way of sitting while eating food
2. Habit of having breakfast early in the morning
3. Contamination of food with saliva
4. Don't talk while eating
5. Using earthen utensils for Cooking
6. Try to eat freshly cooked food
7. Early Dinning habit
8. Eating food with hands
9. Eating Healthy food
10. Load every day ingredients with protective, preventive and medicinal food
11. Avoid refined oils
12. Avoid sweetening agents such as sugar
13. Drinking more water for good health
14. Habit of enough sleep
15. Meditation
16. Regular exercise

1. Way of sitting while eating food: According to experts, Indian typical yogic posture called **Sukhasan**(sitting on the floor with crossed legs) which is said to massage the abdominal muscles, increase flexibility & boost circulation in lower part of the body. When there were no dining tables, everyone sat on floor while having food and very few suffered from lifestyle diseases. If possible bend while eating instead of sitting straight. This practice limits the food intake and is good for maintaining health.

2. Habit of having breakfast early in the morning: The roots of having an early morning breakfast go long back in history. The legendary Roman breakfast taken immediately after the sun rise is known as "jentaculum". It must have been considered healthy to indulge in nourishing food early in the morning. If possible practice eating within 20 minutes of waking up. It is good even for weight loss. Don't postponing or skipping your breakfast because it gives us maximum energy for the day and also increases metabolism.

3. Contamination of food with saliva: Sharing food from the same plate, drinking water from common glass and taking bite from the same slice appears to be quite a normal practice for many of us and rather impolite to refuse if a friend is offering it. The concept of contamination with saliva called "engili" (Telugu), uchchishtam (sanskrit), "jutha" (in North India) is considered unholy and extremely unhygienic. Washing hands before and after eating or putting them in the

mouth is considered a must lest the food/person/thing touched would be contaminated. While it has time and again been given religious connotations, it should actually be looked upon as a practice of hygiene and a wise way to prevent spreading of diseases.

4. Don't talk while eating: Most of us have grown up hearing that talking while eating is a bad manner. In older days, it was considered a taboo to converse while eating. The main reason behind it probably was the fear of choking on food or hurriedly gulping it down without chewing. Nutrition scientists and doctors say that chewing food well enables in better digestion.

5. Using earthen utensils for Cooking: Our ancestors cooked food in earthenware because they did not know about aluminum, steel, plastic, non stick cook wares and microwaves. But that was not the only reason for it. Clay pots are cheap, available locally, can be easily replaced and are totally biodegradable, causing no harm to our environment. Cooking in clay pots adds calcium, phosphorus, iron, magnesium, sulphur and several other minerals to food. Clay pots are also alkaline in nature so they mix well with acidic food and balance its PH level. Remember, deadly diseases like cancer do not develop in an alkaline atmosphere. Science has proved that nutrition preservation in food cooked in clay pots is the highest when compared to metal utensils. But we prefer to proudly flaunt our overpriced metal pans instead.

6. Try to eat freshly cooked food: If possible one should consume meal within four hours of preparing it, to get the maximum benefits. In ancient times when there were no ready to eat and frozen foods, there were fewer lifestyle diseases. Food starts losing its nourishment as soon as it is prepared. So it is advisable to eat it fresh. While in most busy households today the concept of preparing meals three times a day has given way to bulk preparation once, it is an unhealthy practice that should be given up.

7. Early Dinning habit: It was taken late in the afternoon or when the sun started going down. Are not nutritionists asking use today to have dinner before 7 pm? The simple reason behind this healthy practice is that the earlier you have your food, the more time the body has to digest it before it goes to rest during sleep. This practice prevents body from piling weight. Eating late also negatively impacts sleep.

8. Eating food with hands: Even as a number of people proudly claim that they are not able to eat unless they have a spoon, the ancient shastras recommended eating with hands “which had to be cleaned thoroughly before and after the meal”. Eating with hands is neither uncouth nor tacky, but is extremely healthy. According to Ayurveda when we put food in our mouth through our hand, the five fingers together form a mudra (a yogic position) which activates the sensory organs that keep prana in balance. It also improves digestion because

when the hand touches the food, the brain sends signals to the body releasing digestive juices. This is probably the reason why food tastes better when eaten with hands.

9. Eating Healthy food: It can be hard to change our eating habits. It helps if we focus on small changes. Making changes to our diet may also be beneficial. If you have diseases that can be made worse by things you are eating or drinking. A vast number of foods are both healthy and tasty. Find the strong and weak points in your current diet. Keep track of your food intake by writing down what you eat and drink every day. Balanced nutrition and regular exercise are good for your health. Intake food should have medium carbohydrates, high protein, high dietary fiber, healthy fats. Some of the healthy foods are Fruits and berries, Eggs, Nuts and seeds, Vegetables, Fish and seafood, Grains, Dairy, Millets, gluten free food, Fats and oils etc.

Rice and wheat replaced millets. A society that consumed millets never heard of blood pressure or diabetes; 30 years ago, they were considered a rich man's disease. Avoid packed and processed foods.

10. Load every day ingredients with protective, preventive and medicinal food: The moment you coughed, your grandmother would tell you to drink hot milk mixed with turmeric and pepper. Studies done by universities abroad have directly linked turmeric to an anti-carcinogen, as well as an antiseptic and antibiotic. Thousands of years ago, our sages practiced yoga, but, ironically, we were convinced of its benefits only when the west recognized its immense powers and popularized it. So, like yoga, we have been brought to see that turmeric is good. Make sure that every curry we prepare should contain a pinch of turmeric. It was used by women to enhance their complexion, and also the best medicine for a scraped knee. Most of our food also contained ginger and garlic, both natural medicinal ingredient used for centuries. In addition, we used a wider array of spices with multiple health benefits -- pepper (relief from respiratory disorders), cumin (helps digestion), fenugreek (controls diabetes, cures acid reflux), mustard (high anti-inflammatory properties), etc.

11. Avoid refined oils: Avoid refined oils as they go through an intensive mechanical and chemical process that creates a product that oxidizes easily and is more likely to break down into cancer-causing free radicals within the body.

12. Avoid sweetening agents such as sugar: Refined sugar is stripped of all these essential nutrients, and what remains is just a 100 per cent calorie bomb. This is the reason for the high incidence of sugar related diseases. It is highly acidic and the last to get digested. Make sweets with Jaggery(which is nothing but sugarcane juice evaporated to dryness without adding any chemical or additive) instead of sugar. It is a very good source of iron, calcium, phosphorous, thiamine, riboflavin and

niacin. Jaggery was used for its excellent medicinal properties: preventing anemia, strengthening the nervous system, purifying the blood, aiding digestion so on, the list is endless.

13. Drinking more water for good health: Most of us don't drink enough water every day. Water is essential for our body to function because over 60% of our body is made up of water. Water is needed to carry out body functions, remove waste, and carry nutrients and oxygen around our body. Since we lose water every day through urine, bowel movements, perspiration and breathing, we need to replenish our water intake. Since food intake contributes about 20% of our fluid intake that means we need to drink about 8-10 glasses a day to stay hydrated. One way to tell if you're hydrated — your urine should be colorless or slightly yellow. If it's not, you're not getting enough water! Other signs include: Dry lips, dry mouth, and little urination.

14. Habit of enough sleep: Lack of sleep may lead to a host of health problems including obesity, diabetes, and even heart disease. Continued lack of sleep can affect your immune system and make you less able to fend off colds and the flu. So, it's important to go and get a good night's sleep. You can do things to help you sleep better at night. You can avoid stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine close to bedtime. Exercise can also help you sleep better at night. As little as 10 minutes of aerobic exercise, such as walking or cycling, can drastically improve nighttime sleep quality but please avoid strenuous workouts close to bedtime.

15. Meditation: Meditation quiets your mind and calms your soul. It can also help you deal with and manage the stress in your life.

16. Regular exercise: If you can exercise don't just a few times a week, but every day. Movement is a key for healthy life. Exercising daily can improve your health in many ways. It can help increase your life span, lower your risk of diseases, help you develop higher bone density, and lose weight. One simple thing you can do is, especially for close distances, choose walking over riding, driving or taking transportation. You can climb the stairs instead of taking the elevator. You can pick exercises that are easy to do at home or outside that you enjoy. When you enjoy the physically activities you choose for yourself, most likely you'll enjoy them and naturally want to do them. Exercise is about being healthy and having fun at the same time. Also, mixing up your exercises will keep them interesting.

CONCLUSION

Living a healthy lifestyle takes a lot of sweat and hard work, but in the end it is worthy. One of the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle is it increase energy levels. We all want tons of energy, but often we are lack of it. Healthy life style is adopted by living in the right way, eating the right food and exercising. Obesity is the major

problem facing by many people irrespective of age. People who have obesity, compared to those with a normal or healthy weight, are at increased risk for many serious diseases and health conditions, including All-causes of death (mortality), High blood pressure (Hypertension), High LDL cholesterol, low HDL cholesterol, or high levels of triglycerides (Dyslipidemia), Type 2 diabetes, PCOS/PCOD, Coronary heart disease, Stroke, Gallbladder disease, Osteoarthritis (a breakdown of cartilage and bone within a joint), Sleep apnea and breathing problems, Some cancers (endometrial, breast, colon, kidney, gallbladder, and liver), Low quality of life, Mental illness such as clinical depression, anxiety, and other mental disorders, Body pain and difficulty with physical functioning. Adopting healthy lifestyle has the benefit of losing and maintains weight which helps in prevent and reduce above mentioned health problems. Healthy lifestyle improves immune system of the body and the quality of life. No matter how small you start, it can make a change and improve your health.

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