



Stretching away the diabetes

# *Can diabetes be* **REVERSED?**

PARTICIPATION IN A DIABETES-REVERSAL WORKSHOP BRINGS

RELIEF AND HOPE TO CONFIRMED DIABETICS

by Rani Swamy

Over the last 20 years, one of the identities I have reluctantly adopted is that of a diabetic. From despair I have moved to accepting the fact that I would have to live with diabetes all my life, and learn to cope with

its complications.

And then one day I received a mail, telling me about a diabetes reversal programme. I was sceptical to begin with. Some of my friends insisted that it just wasn't possible, and a confirmed diabetic

would remain so forever. Curiosity got the better of me and I shot back a reply expressing my interest. I received a screening form, which I duly filled and returned. Then I forgot all about it.

One Sunday afternoon, I got a

call from Dr Nandita Shah, a former homoeopathic doctor turned passionate vegan, who was conducting the programme. She asked a few more relevant questions and confirmed my admission. More important, she reiterated that it was possible to reverse the disease.

The 21-day diabetic reversal programme was held in the holistic atmosphere of Our Native Village, a hundred per cent eco resort at Hessarghata on the outskirts of Bangalore. The goal was to bring down blood sugar levels, and reduce medication.

Twenty-one of us (12 women and nine men) facing the common problem of diabetes had enrolled for the programme. Some were sceptical, others positive, some approached it with an open mind. But everyone agreed that this was probably the first place where we could open up about our problems without hesitation or embarrassment.

We introduced ourselves to each other, and also to Dr Nandita Shah, and Dr Neeta Dharamsey, another homeopath turned vegan, both of whom most of us were meeting for the first time. Little did we realise that this was the beginning of a lasting relationship. Neeta's mother and Heerna, part of the Sharan group, supported the doctors. The staff of Our Native Village (ONV) led by Ram Kumar and Ambika made our stay comfortable and served us the most delicious food.

The food was the crux of the



The healing power of walking

treatment. The diet consisted of vegan organic food that was completely oil-free. Raw food formed a substantial part of the diet. And unlikely as it sounds the food was delicious. Like most Indians I have been conditioned to consume large quantities of milk and milk products. In fact, I remember being ticked off by my mother whenever I refused to drink milk. A vegan diet, therefore, was a novelty. Animal products were strictly off. Initially I did miss curds, but we were introduced to soy curds and curds made from peanut milk. They were so tasty that soon we were demanding recipes!

The next day we were all subjected to a complete blood test. After checking our fasting blood sugar, we were pleasantly surprised at the yummy fruit repast in front of us – mangoes, chikoos, bananas, jackfruit, and papayas. I

wondered if I was dreaming, as I knew that some of these fruits were taboo for a diabetic patient. With some hesitation we ate and soon it became a regular feature. Coffee and tea were out; instead we were served delicious herbal teas flavoured with tulsi, cinnamon, or lemon grass. I missed my morning cup of coffee, but soon even that became a distant memory.

As days went by, most of us insulin-dependent diabetics found our insulin levels lowered. Quite the reverse of visits to my diabetes doctor, which always resulted in increased insulin levels. Slowly but surely, all of us shed some weight. Helping us along were the long leisurely walks in the picturesque countryside, and watching the spectacular sunrise and sunset.

Checking fasting blood sugar was an everyday task. When



Sitting through a cookery class

someone showed lowered results, they were cheered, when someone didn't, we offered words of encouragement, sometimes much to their annoyance! This was followed by fruit and herbal tea.

A typical day in the programme:

6.30 – 7 am: Check for blood sugar and blood pressure after which we have some fruit. Some of us would go for a walk before this.

7 – 8 am: Yoga (followed by fruit, for those who did not have it earlier or who would like more)

8 – 10 am: Shower, followed by breakfast.

10 am – 1 pm: Session with Dr Nandita Shah. ( Discussions would range from causes of diabetes, conditioning, benefits of whole vegan diet, the importance of minerals, vitamin B12, vitamin D and so on)

1 - 3.30 pm: Lunch and free time

3.30 – 4.15 pm: Guided relaxation

4.15 – 6 pm: Exercise and free time, unless we were scheduled

for a consultation. Consultations were need-based. Whenever a participant's blood sugar or blood pressure was low, or if she/he was having problems, there would be consultation, monitoring of medication and advice.

6 – 7 pm: Guided meditation

7- 8 pm: Dinner

8 – 9 pm: A film and/or discussion about how we were feeling or anything that we would want to talk about. Some of the films on the benefits of new food were thought-provoking. I particularly enjoyed a film on Victoria Butenko, a supporter of raw food. Neal Barnard, a protagonist for a holistic food diet regimen, is an inspiration too.

During our 21-day stay we had four cooking classes. This was a lot of fun, especially for the ladies, who tried their hand at cooking. Some of the men also participated eagerly. One of them photographed the menu daily, so that his family members could see what he was eating. We even made des-

serts – the highlight being a raw cake – a layered cake made of dry fruits and fruits. Food was something all of us looked forward to.

Kapila and Sushil Kumar took us through a past-life regression session. It was an emotional and moving session. On Buddha Pournima day, Neelima Bhat of Sampurnah Holistic Health gave a talk about Emotional Freedom Technique, and her work. That evening there was a full moon meditation outdoors.

Soon all of us became a close-knit family. We openly shared our problems and even found solutions. It was turning out to be a great holiday. We felt like college students living in a hostel.

Two days before the programme concluded, we had our blood tests done, and everyone showed some improvement. Personally speaking as insulin levels are much lower, my medication has been discontinued. I have been taught how to control my insulin levels. Of course, Dr Nandita Shah is always available to us on email. She is prompt in answering all our queries. We have now formed an email group, and everyone shares their experiences. Last month we were strangers, now the 30 of us have bonded for a lifetime. If you are a diabetic, remember you are not alone. There is hope and help available to lead a normal life, do everything you wanted to, and eat healthy, wholesome, tasty food. ☺

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