

'Diabetes can be reversed'

Dr Nandita Shah, Jan 24, 2013 at 7:51 AM

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my earliest patients was a 70-year-old man who had been diabetic for 30 years. He came to me not because of his diabetes, but because of the complications. He was losing his vision and had neuropathy. Despite medications, his sugar was not controlled. His fasting blood sugar was 222. Within two weeks of stopping the dairy in his vegetarian diet, his fasting blood sugar dropped to 88! He improved to the extent that he no longer needed any medications and could even take jaggery in his sweets without having high blood sugars.'

'Another patient, a young man of 21 who had been told by his doctor that he would have to take insulin lifelong. He was taking three injections of insulin a day. Within just two weeks, he was off all insulin, and had normal blood sugar levels!'



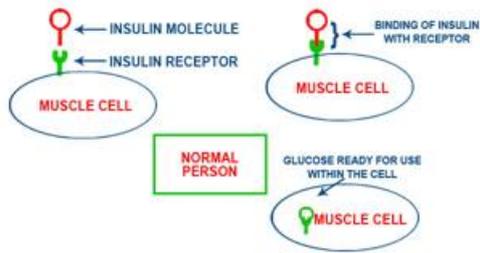
Dr Nandita Shah, the founder of SHARAN which works to promote the vegan diet and how it could help reverse diabetes and other lifestyle diseases tells us more. 'SHARAN's goal is a diabetes-free India. Each one of us has the potential to reverse our own diabetes. This is important because despite controlling blood sugar levels with diet and medications, most diabetics end up suffering from a variety of dreaded complications from neuropathies to loss of vision, kidney failures, heart attacks and gangrene. Taking responsibility for our own health results in a transformation not just in the body, but in mind and spirit as well.'

Can diabetes really be reversed?

Most people with diabetes are given the same advice by their doctors – to cut down carbohydrates, cut out sugars, get more exercise, and take medications or insulin. This is a life sentence. Everyone knows that this does not cure diabetes! Despite this, most diabetics are willing to follow this advice, only because there is comfort in doing what everybody else does. We are herd animals whether we like it or not!

Solving a problem is better than controlling it

In order to solve any problem, one needs to find the cause and eliminate it. Sugar is not the cause of diabetes, so no amount of cutting of sugar and carbohydrates can reverse (cure) diabetes. In fact, it is the other way around. Blood sugar levels rise *due* to diabetes and are not a cause for it, as is popularly believed. Resistance to the action or in other cases, lack of insulin plays a great part. It stands to logic that if we understand what the cause of insulin resistance is, or why the body stops producing insulin, and remove this cause we will be successful in reversing diabetes.

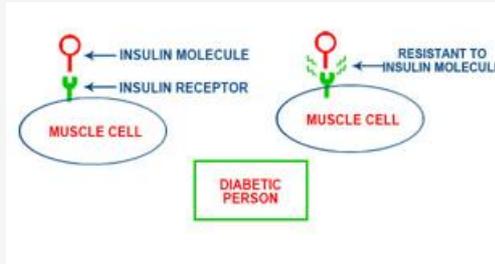


In a normal healthy person

The muscle cells have receptors for insulin. Insulin normally acts as a key and lodges on the receptors, signaling the gates to allow glucose to enter the muscle cell. This glucose is used by the cell as energy, for all the vital functions.

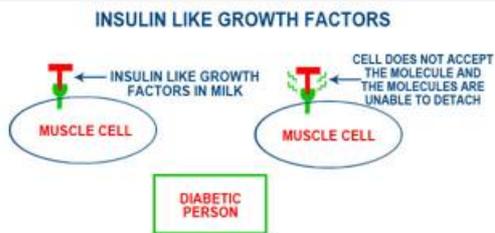
In a type II diabetic:

The insulin receptors become resistant, i.e., the key does not open the gate, and glucose cannot enter. The result is a concentration of glucose in the blood stream. In order to dilute this, the diabetic drinks more water, and urinates it out, along with the glucose. The result, glucose, which should provide energy to the muscle cell is unavailable for that purpose. The muscles have no energy, and the diabetic experiences this as weakness. When a doctor is consulted, the patient is generally advised to take antidiabetic drugs, which temporarily reduces the insulin resistance. However because the cause of insulin resistance still persists, the diabetes is never cured.



What causes the insulin resistance?

It has been scientifically proven through the work of Dr Neal Barnard, the author of the Program for Reversing Diabetes that **the cause of insulin resistance is fat in the muscle cells (intramyocellular lipids) while reduce the sensitivity of the receptors to insulin.** This has been echoed by others in the scientific community too.



The **other cause could be the 'Insulin-like growth factor' present in milk.** Since it is very similar to insulin, it blocks the receptors. It is basically similar to a situation when you're trying to open a lock with the wrong key. The situation is worse because the wrong key is stuck and you cannot use the right key either. The blocked receptors in our body do not let muscle cells use the glucose, leading to increased sugar levels.

Golden rules to help you fight insulin resistance:

- Eat plant foods in their most natural state, without the use of refined products like oil, ghee, butter, hydrogenated fats (vanaspati).
- Cut out animal products which are naturally high in fats.
- Processed foods are also best avoided as they are typically high in fats and refined products. Add whole foods like whole unpolished rice, whole wheat, unpeeled vegetables and fruits to your diet.
- Avoid all milk and dairy products from the diet. Switch to plant-based milks like soy milk, almond milk, oat milk and rice milk.

By making these dietary changes, the glucose levels approach normalcy gradually. If the patient is on medications, regular consults with doctors become necessary to reduce the dosage as per the blood sugar levels. With time, all medications could be eliminated.

The results are exemplary

Just by following the rules mentioned above, eventually one can lead a medication-free life. Some complications due to diabetes could be reversed. Body weight, if excessive, returns to normal. Cholesterol levels improve, and heart disease and hypertension become a rarity.

Can Type 1 diabetes be reversed too?

Type I diabetes is a disorder where insulin is not produced at all, or very little is produced. According to research, it has been found that infants who are fed animal milk at an early age instead of their mother's milk are more likely to develop this type of diabetes. In some people, the protein in the cow's milk stimulates production of antibodies, which are basically fighter proteins produced by the immune system with the intention of fighting the proteins from milk. However, since pancreatic cells are structurally similar to the milk proteins, these antibodies destroy the pancreatic cells instead. This reduces the insulin-producing capacity of these cells leading to Type 1 diabetes. Other factors like certain chemicals or medications can reduce this capacity too. Although some cases of type 1 diabetes cannot be reversed, most cases can be reversed over a period of time, resulting in a reduction in or altogether elimination of insulin requirement.

It is time to change!

It's important to understand that we can't solve a problem by continuing the same lifestyle that caused it in the first place. Most people come up with excuses for not following the lifestyle prescribed when they aren't at home or when they travel. You should acknowledge that it's all in the mind. And if you start believing that your needs are special and it's difficult to find what you need, it often becomes a reality. Don't vegetarians traveling to other

countries eat? Don't Jains follow their 'no root vegetables' rule wherever they go?

In order to sustain this new lifestyle, one needs to learn how to cook delicious healthy food without oil. The second important step is to make a commitment to try this out completely for at least a month. However, sugar, salt, oil or fried foods, meat and dairy all are as addictive as any habit, say smoking. Even after eating consciously for a whole month, one could fall into their trap again, even with a single bite. It's therefore useful to have support from friends, family and from people who are trying out similar lifestyle changes.

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-  **Brendan McDonagh** January 26, 2013 at 4:57 am
Hello.
great article but, I believe that the recommended procedure is much too rigid and therefore services one of the psychological obstacles of the typical type 2 diabetes mindset namely deprivation or diet mentality. I completely reversed my own type 2 and am now four years clear with a written medical bill of health. I was 53 lbs overweight and with a hereditary history at diagnosis. I didn't restrict any foods at all and today four years on I remain 53 lbs lighter and at my natural bmi. I totally disagree with your demonizing of any foods. A successful reversal is about education, body/mind balance a new mindset and a potential reward. I also had a brain haemorrhage half way through my diabetes reversal plan and beat both conditions without side effects. I'm 55 years old and if I can do it anyone can but never by restriction.
[Reply](#)
-  **Jimbo** January 28, 2013 at 8:14 am
Brendan...Can you share the reversal diet or procedure?
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-  **arun gholap** January 24, 2013 at 12:48 pm
get well all diabetics
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