

# Cure to all ailments lies in our food

Homeopathic doctor Nandita Shah says “if we eat using our instinct it’s hard to get sick”. She also offers some simple tips to healthy cooking



Image Credit: Supplied  
Dr Nandita Shah conducting a cooking class

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By Shahana Raza, Special to tabloid!

Preparing and planning meals at home is almost always a hand-me-down concept. We cook what we have learnt from our mothers, grandmothers and mothers-in-law. But by re-learning how to prepare meals the right way one can prevent and reverse most lifestyle diseases, says homeopathic doctor Nandita Shah.

“We eat according to our intellect not our instinct. Lions don’t eat grass and cows have no preference for meat. But we put everything in our mouth. If we eat using instinct it’s hard to get sick,” Shah, who is in Dubai to conduct a 10-day healthy eating workshop, told *tabloid!*

Advocating a vegan diet — which means not consuming milk and dairy products — she says the answer to fending off lifestyle diseases lies in eating what nature intended us to.

“Also avoid processed foods, learn to eat everything whole, do not peel fruits and vegetables except those that you can with your hands such as onion and garlic because remember our closest relatives are primates, and they don’t peel and eat.”

In her over 30 years of practice, Shah realised that medicine was not the answer to good health or needed to reverse lifestyle diseases.

“Vegetarians get the same diseases as non-vegetarians, so it isn’t just meat [which is the problem]. I would give medicines to patients and they would come back to me in two to three months with the same problem — they never really got rid of it.”

The cure, she feels, lies in what we eat. For her there are four important causes of disease that can be linked to diet — excess of fat in meals, a surplus of protein, lack of fibre and the fact that we are ingesting empty calories from food such as white rice, sugar, flour and oil.

“Oil is completely processed, it has empty calories and that’s why it should be avoided,” says Shah.

Specialising in holistic health and nutrition, Shah hosts master classes where she skillfully prepares delectable items from falafel to vegetable biryani without using a single drop of oil. She can even fry up onions sans oil by just sprinkling a pinch of salt on them and letting them cook in their own juice.

Apart from eating and sleeping right, and exercising regularly Shah advises practising temperance, that is, avoiding addictive things.

“Stop thinking of only yourself. Have an attitude of gratitude and practise benevolence because everything in the universe is interconnected”.

### **Cure through nutrition**

Dr Nandita Shah started Sharan — Sanctuary for Health and Reconnection to Animals & Nature — in 2005. Sharan is a non-profit organisation to create awareness on how to control lifestyle diseases, such as diabetes, obesity and hypertension, through diet. Sharan conducts cooking classes, weekly retreats and 21-day residential programmes through the year to promote healthy lifestyles.

For more information log on to [sharan-india.org](http://sharan-india.org). Dr Shah will be conducting a series of cooking workshops from April 18 to April 28 in the UAE. For details call 050-4811783 or 050-6313002.

### **Shah’s simple tips to healthy cooking**

1. Steam, grill and/or bake items such as falafel and fritters instead of frying them.
2. Replace oil for flavour by using crushed peanuts, sesame seeds and grated coconut.
3. Use steam to prepare crepes, pancakes, and dosas/cheelas (Indian savoury crepes).
4. Use dates and raisins instead of sugar
5. Cook food in the right vessels: choose pots and pans made of steel, cast-iron or ceramic. Avoid using non-stick cookware as the coating is made of Teflon, which is considered carcinogenic. Never cook in a microwave and do not use aluminium and copper vessels as the metal leaches into food during the cooking process.

— Shahana Raza is a UAE-based freelance writer.