

'Let your food be the medicine '

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Plant-based diet can reverse lifestyle diseases, says Dr Nandita Shah

An India-based doctor is on a mission to promote health without medicines, and reverse lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity through a plant-based diet. Dr Nandita Shah is a homoeopath and founder of SHARAN, a non-profit organisation that conducts health programmes in India and propagates the idea of holistic living by reconnecting with nature and changing dietary habits.

"Most people today are controlling diabetes, which means, they are taking medicines, reducing their carbohydrates, sugar (intake), maybe doing some exercise (as well) but do not show signs of improvement. Instead over a period of time they get worse and increase their dosage of medicines; some develop complications too," says Dr Shah.

However, by adopting a plant-based diet that discourages the use of processed food, artificial sugars and oil, Dr Shah says that patients can reverse their diseases and attain complete health without any need for medications.

Dr Varun Eapen, a Dubai-based dentist, is among many who vouch for the success of veganism and its positive effects. At the age of 25, Dr Varun suffered from acute Rheumatoid Arthritis. He was slowly losing mobility, was on medication and had to use a wheelchair to move around. However, that led to excessive weight gain and considerably less relief in terms of pain. He later turned to homoeopathy and ayurveda, but nothing really helped much. "About 15-18 months ago my mother, who is also a doctor, asked me to try veganism. We followed Dr Shah's diet and advice, and now here I am in a much better condition. I have lost a lot of weight and the pain has significantly reduced," said Dr Varun.

Dr Shah's approach to veganism is not new. A number of doctors for years have been advocating the benefits of the plant-based diet. Several notable published works including the best sellers: *The China Study* by T. Colin Campbell and *Reversing Diabetes* by Dr Neal Bernard, examine the relationship between the consumption of animal products and chronic illnesses, and talk about the goodness of veganism.

A recent study by four sustainability researchers from the University of Oxford also supports the healthy lifestyle choice and notes that eating less meat reduces the prevalence of chronic, non-communicable diseases associated with high body weight and unhealthy diets.

In fact the researchers go on to say that if the world adopts the vegan diet, we could save more than 8 million lives by 2050, reduce greenhouse emissions by two-thirds and save 1.5 trillion pounds in climate-related damages.

Make a lifestyle change: *Dr Nandita Shah will give a lecture at a day-long seminar in Al Barsha today. For more details, log on to www.sharan-india.org.*