

Taste management

By Phorum Dalal / Posted 26-Jul-2014

When you are battling high-risk diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart ailments, dietary restrictions become the core focus of every meal. Phorum Dalal speaks to nutritionists and finds out how with some innovation, you don't have to neglect your taste buds

Once you are diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension, obesity or a kidney ailment, it is assumed that you are no longer allowed to crave for hot pakoras on a rainy day, leave alone a scoop of ice-cream after dinner.

You are forced to eat bland food, and curb your cravings, while friends and families around you chomp away on goodies. But that need not be the case anymore.

“If you make an effort to replace the salt, sugar, fats in your kitchen with natural healthier options, it could go a long way in making your health better,” says Bhavna Kapoor, a health coach in Andheri West.

Cook creatively

To spread awareness about healthy yet creative cooking, Narmada Kidney Foundation, an Andheri-based NGO which spreads awareness about kidney diseases, will conduct a Diet Cooking competition on August 3. Participants have to dish out vegetarian dishes for patients suffering from obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Does the idea of boiled vegetables come to your mind? “It is assumed that a patient suffering from any high-risk diseases is expected to eat bland food, cut down on sugar and fat content, but there is no harm in being creative and making dishes using healthy and natural ingredients,” says Dr Bharat Shah founder of the Narmada Kidney Foundation, Andheri East, and also the founder and director in-charge of Global Hospital, Mumbai.

“The treatment for any kidney disease is complicated and extensive. Patients have to keep their hypertension, diabetes and heart diseases under control as it affects the renal function,” says Dr Shah.

Easy changes

Cooking responsibly can get quite taxing, but simple changes can turn into good cooking habits, says Kapoor. “Cooking oil can be replaced with powdered nuts or grated coconut.

Not only does it give a crunchy texture to the dish, you even get your dose of essential fibre from the nuts. While baking cakes, dried fruits such as dates and apricots are a great addition to the batter instead of sugar. Even pumpkin is a natural sweetener.

Maida (refined flour) can be replaced by wheat flour, too,” suggests Kapoor, who conducts healthy cooking and healthy lifestyle classes. To thicken your soup, instead of cream, one can boil gourd and mix it in coconut milk. “The taste will alter slightly, but one can balance it out by adding garlic,” says Kapoor.

Replace that salt

Zamrurd Patel, a dietician at Global Hospital, Parel, who is one of the judges at the competition gives interesting tips to keep in mind while cooking for a high-risk disease patient. While a normal person can consume 8 g of salt in a day, a hypertension patient can have only 2 g or less.

Thus, they can add amchur (dry mango powder) tamarind or even vinegar to their food, which is completely safe. So be it a pasta, or a soup, they can still consume tasty food,” says Patel, who suggests adding raisin or date paste to food and drinks instead of sugar, jaggery or honey.

Frozen Banana Ice-cream

Ingredients

- >> 4 ripe bananas
- >> 1 tsp cinnamon powder
- >> 4 chopped walnuts



Recipe by Dr Nandita Shah, founder of SHARAN, a health centre

Method

- >> Place peeled, halved bananas in a box in the freezer for two days
- >> Blend them till you get a creamy texture
- >> Add some cinnamon and walnuts. Serve immediately.
- >> For variations, garnish with berries, raisins or chopped fruit of your choice.
- >> Replace the cinnamon and walnuts with zest of $\frac{1}{4}$ of an orange and 1 tbsp grated ginger or vanilla extract for vanilla ice cream.

Onion Pakoras Without Frying

Ingredients

- >> 4 medium onions, song slices
- >> 4 heaped tbsp besan (chickpea flour)
- >> $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt
- >> $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp chilli powder
- >> $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp turmeric powder
- >> Ginger-chilli paste to taste
- >> Ajwain to taste



Recipe by Dr Nandita Shah

Method

- >> Mix all the ingredients together and let it stand for about two minutes
- >> The onions will release water which will help bind the ingredients
- >> Place these on a baking tray in little blobs of about 1 tsp and bake in a pre-heated oven at 190 C till they turn brown
- >> Serve hot with chutney

Choco-peanut Fudge Brownies

Ingredients

- >> 1/2 cup natural peanut butter, or any nut/seed butter
- >> 1/4 cup coconut oil
- >> 3 tablespoons cocoa powder or cacao
- >> 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- >> A pinch of salt, (only if using unsalted peanut butter)



Recipe by Bhavna Kapoor, health and lifestyle coach in Andheri West

Method

- >> Blend the above ingredients in a mixer till it turns into a thick batter
- >> Line a flat tray with foil or butter paper and pour the mixture. Refrigerate in the freezer for one hour. Take it out and cut into pieces or just break into pieces

Fun facts

- >> While a normal person can consume 8 g of salt in a day, a hypertension patient can have 2 g.
- >> Add amchur (dry mango powder) tamarind or even vinegar to foods to replace salt content.
- >> Raisin or date paste can be used as a sweetener for food and drinks instead of sugar, jaggery or honey.