

GREEN REVOLUTION

A plant based diet without preservatives, processing and refining, can reverse most lifestyle diseases without the need for medicines

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Dan Brotherton was overweight and had high blood pressure for years. Until he adopted a low-fat vegan diet some two years ago. Since then, his weight has remained between 75 and 79 kgs — “I eat like a horse and am never hungry.” His blood pressure in the last three years has stayed around 125/75, plus or minus 10 points without medication. His lichen planus (common chronic condition of the skin and mouth) has almost cleared up and the trigger finger on his left hand that kept locking doesn't lock any more. And yes, his gums no longer bleed.

Gerald Klosky, 69, had a history of adult-type diabetes for which he took five different kinds of medications (eight pills and two to three shots of insulin a day). He also had high blood pressure for which he took four kinds of medications (seven pills a day). This represents over \$350 a month in medication costs (from a discount online pharmacy — costs would be much more from a local drugstore). He also suffered from obesity, severe constipation and bone loss. But after Klosky adopted a low-fat vegan diet, he threw away all of his medication. “I feel greater than I have felt for decades, I have shaken off the shackles of an unhealthy lifestyle.”

Dan Brotherton and Gerald Klosky are a part of thousands of people who have benefited from a low fat whole plant based diet. A diet programme introduced by renowned American physician and author, Dr John McDougall, that is said to reverse medical conditions that include diabetes, obesity, heart disease as well as auto-immune diseases. The human body is a perfect machine. However, the wrong input can cause several problems. Just as putting low-quality petrol affects the functioning of a vehicle, similarly, a wrong diet is the cause behind most diseases, including diabetes and arthritis. With India being the diabetes capital of the world, this philosophy acquires added significance.

McDougall says that starch is the food that civilisations have been based on since centuries. So, what is a starch diet? It is a plant based diet that comes from plants, without additions or subtractions. Adding includes preservatives, colours and many other such ingredients that can cause harm to the human body. Subtracting includes processing and refining. Sugar, maida, oil are typical examples of foods which have elements that have been removed from the original plant form.

The problem today is the high dependence on convenience and packaged foods. As income levels rise in India, meat has also become part of the daily menu in many households. The most common argument in favour of meat is the need for proteins. Protein is extremely misunderstood. Plants contain proteins and all the essential amino acids needed to build it. Animal protein, therefore, is not necessary to get the protein your body needs. In fact, scientists have found that animal proteins are particularly damaging to the body because so many of their amino acids contain sulphur, which is far more toxic to the kidneys and liver than vegetable protein.

Cholesterol management is a big issue for most urban Indians. The body produces all the cholesterol it needs; and as for fats, plants already contain adequate amounts and only plants make the essential fatty acids your body needs to function. What's more, plant food

never contains cholesterol. Carbohydrates and starch are what the body needs. Starch is the primary source of energy, and it alone provides energy for red blood cells and certain cells of the kidneys. They are also the preferred fuel for the central nervous system, including the brain. There

are no carbohydrates in meat and fish, and most dairy products contain very little of it. McDougall's researches bust several popular myths. For example, fish is considered extremely beneficial. Eskimos, who daily consume 250gm to 400gm of proteins in fish, whale or walrus meats and 2,200 mg of calcium from fish bone,

have the highest incidence of osteoporosis of any population in the world! Plant foods contain generous amounts of calcium.

Osteoporosis is not a disease that results from too little calcium, but primarily from acids derived from too much animal protein that rob the body of calcium and

individual nutrients, like protein or calcium, while being deficient in others. By contrast, plant foods are rich in antioxidants and provide a wide spectrum of vitamins, minerals and other health-promoting nutrients. Plant foods are the most abundant sources of nutrition on earth — there are 13 essential nutrients and 11 of them are made from plants. The two that are not produced by plants are vitamins D and B12, which are stored in your tissues for a long time. One can get enough Vitamin D with adequate exposure to sunlight and B12 can be easily supplemented.

Plant based foods provide a holistic solution to the needs of the human body.

Today, many Indians are prescribed various kinds of medications for different diseases, be it for control or prevention. A plant based diet negates the need for all these different medications by providing all the requirements that the body needs. An individual need not bother about eating specific foods to prevent or “cure” different diseases. Whole grains, unrefined flours, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, beans, legumes, lentils, peas and fruits go a long way in keeping the body functioning at an optimum level. However, the moment foods such as cow's milk, butter, cheese, cottage cheese, yoghurt, sour cream, icecream, eggs, meat, mayonnaise, vegetable oils, sugar, white rice, white flour, refined and sugar-coated cereals, chocolate, coffee and colas are introduced, the problem begins. Most of them can be replaced by healthy substitutes like nut butters and nut-based cheeses and milks.

With 30 years of research and successful results backing him, McDougall has helped thousands of people reverse degenerative diseases simply by adapting a low-fat, whole foods, plant based, diet. It all started when he himself in 1965, at the age of 18, suffered from a massive stroke, which left him completely paralysed on the left side for two weeks. This set him thinking and on researching, he realised that the American diet was the major cause behind his ill state of health.

He then started observing his elder patients who had migrated to the US from the far east and were comparatively trim and healthy, for their diet mainly consisted of rice and vegetables. “They had no diabetes, heart disease, arthritis or any kinds of cancers,” he recalls. “However, their children tempted by western food slowly changed. And the third generation totally gave up rice and vegetables for meat, dairy and junk. They became fatter and sicker, and most of their grandchildren lost all their immunity to obesity and common diseases.”

McDougall's mission to spread awareness of how we can regain our health simply by eating right, has gained ground over the years, and helped prevent, and reverse, health problems like obesity, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, peptic ulcer, arthritis, asthma and autoimmune disorders. Going green, clearly, keeps you in the pink of health. ■

(The writer reversed his diabetes with the help of SHARAN—Sanctuary for Health and Reconnection to Animals and Nature—the organisation that invited Dr McDougall to conduct workshops across India earlier this month)



thus weaken the bones. Also, animal foods have little nutritional value. There is no comparison between animal and plant foods when it comes to providing immune-boosting and cancer-fighting nutrients. Animal foods are either exceedingly low or devoid of antioxidants and tend to offer concentrated amounts of