

When diet and exercise show results



YOUR HEALTH

DR GITA MATHAI

Q I have been trying to lose weight through diet and exercise but nothing seems to work.

To break through a plateau, aim to keep your daily calorie intake around 1,500. You can find the calorie content of common Indian foods online. Burn at least 500 calories through physical activity each day. Focus on zone 2 training, which is exercise performed at 60-70 per cent of your maximum heart rate. To calculate your maximum heart rate, subtract your age from 220. This training improves aerobic capacity, enhances fat metabolism, and supports sustainable weight loss. It may take a few weeks to show results, but it's one of the most effective long-term strategies for reducing body fat.

Power of yoga

Q I want to have a strong, healthy body but I cannot go to a gym regularly.

Often, we forget the many benefits of the ancient Indian practice of yoga. It requires just a mat and no weights. The sequence of poses in Suryanamaskar is an excellent full-body strength workout, as it engages almost every muscle group.

Enlarged prostate

Q I am currently on medication for an enlarged prostate. I am afraid of undergoing surgery.

In addition to taking your medication regularly and not missing any doses, you can try the following lifestyle modifications that may help manage your symptoms:

- Pelvic floor (Kegel) exercises: These strengthen the pelvic muscles and may improve urinary control. You can easily learn how to do them through reputable health websites or instructional videos online
- Timed voiding: Try to urinate every three hours during the day to avoid bladder overdistension

- Double voiding: After finishing urination, wait a minute or two, then try to urinate again. This helps empty the bladder more completely

- Limit fluid intake: Avoid drinking fluids after 6 or 7pm to reduce nighttime urination

- Avoid stimulants: Do not consume tea or coffee after 5pm and avoid alcohol, as these can irritate the bladder.

Diabetes risk

Q My diabetes is out of control and the doctor says I need to start insulin injections.

Uncontrolled diabetes means that your body is unable to regulate blood sugar levels, even with a calorie-controlled diet, regular exercise and oral medication. This can be dangerous. It increases the risk of stroke, heart attack, vision loss and non-healing wounds, particularly in the feet. If your doctor has advised insulin, it is wise to start it without delay as it can help bring your blood sugar under control and prevent long-term complications.

Potbelly

Q I have an unseemly potbelly. I've tried sit-ups and crunches, but nothing seems to work.

Unfortunately, targeted abdominal exercises alone will not reduce belly fat. To lose your potbelly, you need to reduce your overall body fat by reaching your ideal body weight. This is best achieved through a combination of a balanced, calorie-controlled diet and regular exercise.

Adult vaccination

Q How important are vaccines for adults?

Older adults require specific immunisations to stay healthy. The flu vaccine should be taken every year as the virus mutates and immunity wanes. After 65, it is essential to receive the pneumococcal vaccine to protect against pneumonia. The herpes zoster vaccine is now available and should be taken. If you haven't had a tetanus booster since your teenage years, it's advisable to get one. Staying up to date with these vaccines can reduce your risk of serious infections.



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