

Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus is a nutritional disorders, characterized by an abnormally elevated level of blood glucose and by the excretion of the excess glucose in the urine. It results from an absolute or relative lack of insulin which leads to abnormalities in carbohydrate metabolism as well as in the metabolism of protein and fat.

Symptoms

The word diabetes is derived from the Greek word meaning "to siphon to pass through", and mellitus comes from the Latin word "honey". Thus two characteristic symptoms, namely, copious urination and glucose in the urine give the name to the disease. The normal volume of urine passed daily is about one and a half liters. The urine is of a pale color, has an acidic reaction and sweetish odor. The quantity of sugar present in it varies from one-and-quarter decigram to two and-a-half grams the total per day in many cases reaching as much as one kg in 15 liters of urine.

A diabetic feels hungry and thirsty most of the time, does not put on weight, though he eats every now and then, and gets tired easily, both physically and mentally. He looks pale, may suffer from anemia, constipation, intense itching around the genital organs, palpitations and general weakness. He feels drowsy and has a lower sex urge than a normal person.

Treatment

Any successful method of diabetes treatment should aim at removal of the actual cause of the disease and building up of the whole health-level of the patient. Diet plays a vital role in such a treatment. The primary dietary consideration for a diabetic patient is that he should be a strict lacto-vegetarian and take a low-calorie, low-fat, alkaline diet of high quality natural foods. Fruits, nuts and vegetables, whole meal bread and dairy products form a good diet for the diabetic. These foods are best eaten in as dry a condition as possible to ensure thorough salivation during the first part of the process of digestion.

Cooked starchy foods should be avoided as in the process of cooking the cellulose envelopes of the starch granules burst and consequently, the starch is far too easily absorbed in the system. The excess absorbed has to be got rid of by the kidneys and appears as sugar in the urine. With raw starchy foods, however, the saliva and digestive juices in the small intestine regulate the quantities required to be changed into sugar for the body's needs. The unused and undigested portion of raw starchy foods does not become injurious to the system, as it does not readily ferment. The diabetic should not be afraid to eat fresh fruits and vegetables which contain sugar and starch. Fresh fruits contain sugar fructose, which does not need insulin for its metabolism and is well tolerated by diabetics. Fats and oils should be taken sparingly, for they are apt to lower the tolerance for proteins and starches. Emphasis should be on raw foods as they stimulate and increase insulin production. For protein, home-made cottage cheese, various forms of soured milks and nuts are best. The patient should avoid overeating and take four or five small meals a day rather than three large ones. The following diet should serve as a guideline.

Diabetes

Upon arising: A glass of lukewarm water with freshly squeezed lemon juice.

Breakfast: Any fresh fruit with the exception of bananas, soaked prunes, a small quantity of whole meal bread with butter and fresh milk.

Lunch: Steamed or lightly cooked green vegetables such as cauliflower, cabbage, tomatoes, spinach, turnip, asparagus and mushrooms, two or three whole wheat chapattis according to appetite and a glass of butter-milk or curd.

Mid-afternoon: A glass of fresh fruit or vegetable juice.

Dinner: A large bowl of salad made up of all the raw vegetables in season. The salad may be followed by a hot course, if desired, and fresh home-made cottage cheese.

Bedtime Snack: A glass of fresh milk.

Flesh foods find no place in this regimen, for they increase the toxæmic condition underlying the diabetic state and reduce the sugar tolerance. On the other hand, a non-stimulating vegetarian diet, especially one made up of raw foods, promotes and increases sugar tolerance. Celery, cucumbers, string beans, onion and garlic are especially beneficial. String bean pod tea is an excellent natural substitute for insulin and highly beneficial in diabetes. The skin of the pods of green beans are extremely rich in silica and certain hormone substances which are closely related to insulin. One cup of string bean tea is equal to one unit of insulin. Cucumbers contain a hormone needed by the cells of the pancreas for producing insulin. Onion and garlic have proved beneficial in reducing blood sugar in diabetes.

Recent scientific investigations have established that bitter gourd (karela) is highly beneficial in the treatment of diabetes. It contains an insulin-like principle, known as plant-insulin which has been found effective in lowering the blood and urine sugar levels. It should, therefore, be included liberally in the diet of the diabetic. For better results, the diabetic should take the juice of about 4 or 5 fruits every morning on an empty stomach. The seeds of bitter gourd can be added to food in a powdered form. Diabetics can also use bitter gourd in the form of decoction by boiling the pieces in water or in the form of dry powder.

Another effective home remedy is jambul fruit known as jamun in the vernacular. It is regarded in traditional medicine as a specific against diabetes because of its effect on the pancreas. The fruits as such, the seeds and fruit juice are all useful in the treatment of this disease. The seeds contain a glucoside 'jamboline' which is believed to have power to check the pathological conversion of starch into sugar in cases of increased production of glucose. They should be dried and powdered. This powder should be taken mixed in milk, curd or water.

The patient should avoid tea, coffee and cocoa because of their adverse influence on the digestive tract. Other foods which should be avoided are white bread, white flour products, sugar tinned fruits, sweets, chocolates, pastries, pies, puddings, refined cereals and alcoholic drinks.

Diabetes

The most important nutrient in the treatment of diabetes is manganese which is vital in the production of natural insulin. It is found in citrus fruits, in the outer covering of nuts, grains and in the green leaves of edible plants. Other nutrients of special value are zinc, B complex vitamins and poly-unsaturated fatty acids.

Exercise is also an important factor in the treatment of diabetes. Light games, jogging and swimming are recommended. Yogic asanas such as bhujangasana, shalabhasana, dhanurasana, paschimottanasana, sarvangasna, halasana, ardha-matsyendrasana and shavasana, yogic kriyas like jalneti and kunajl and pranayamas such as kapalbhati, anuloma-viloma and ujjai are highly beneficial.

Hydrotherapy and colonic irrigations form a very important part of treatment. The colon should be thoroughly cleansed every second day or so, until the bowel discharge assumes normal characteristics. Bathing in cold water greatly increases the circulation and enhances the capacity of the muscles to utilize sugar.

The diabetic patient should eliminate minor worries from his daily life. He must endeavor to be more easy-going and should not get unduly worked up by the stress and strain of life.

Reference

Shri H.K. Bakhru. (1999). Natures Cure.