

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis or consumption is one of the most dreaded diseases. It is a major health problem in India and often rated the number one killer. Over five lakh people die of this disease every year.

Tuberculosis is caused by a tiny germ called tubercle bacillus which is so small that it can be detected only by a microscope. The germ enters into the body through the nose, mouth and windpipe and settles down in the lungs. It multiplies by millions and produces small raised spots called tubercles.

Tuberculosis is not hereditary but an infectious or communicable disease. Those suffering from the disease for a considerable time eject living germs while coughing or spitting and when these enter the nose or mouth of healthy persons, they contract the disease. Mouth breathing and kissing as well as contaminated food and water are also responsible for spreading tuberculosis.

Symptoms

Tuberculosis is of four types, namely of lungs, intestines, bones and glands. Pulmonary tuberculosis or tuberculosis of the lung is by far the most common type of tuberculosis. It tends to consume the body and the patient loses strength, color and weight. Other symptoms are a raise in temperature especially in the evening, a persistent cough and hoarseness, difficulty in breathing, pain in the shoulders, indigestion, chest pain, and blood in the sputum.

Treatment

Tuberculosis is no longer considered incurable if it is tackled in the early stages. An all round scheme of dietetic and vitality building program along naturallines is the only method to overcome the disease. As a first step, the patient should be put on an exclusive fresh fruit diet for three or four days. He should have three meals a day of fresh, juicy fruits, such as apples, grapes, pears, peaches, oranges, pineapple, melon or any other juicy fruit in season. Bananas, dried or tinned fruits should not be taken. For drinks, unsweetened lemon water or plain water either hot or cold may be taken. If losing such weight on the all-fruit diet, those already under weight may add a glass of milk to each fruit meal.

After the all-fruit diet, the patient should adopt a fruit and milk diet. For this diet, the meals are exactly the same as the all-fruit diet, but with milk added to each fruit meal. The patient may begin with a liter of milk the first day and increase by quarter liter daily upto two to two and a half liters according to how the milk agrees. The milk should be fresh and un-boiled, but may be slightly warmed if desired. It should be sipped very slowly. The fruit and milk diet should be continued for four to six weeks. Thereafter, the following dietary may be adopted:

Breakfast: Fresh fruits, as obtainable, and milk. Prunes or other dried fruits may also be taken, if desired.

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Lunch: Steamed vegetables as available, one or two whole wheat chapattis and a glass of buttermilk.

Dinner: A bowl of raw salad of suitable vegetables with whole wheat bread and butter. Stewed fruit or cooked apple may be taken for dessert.

At bed time: A glass of milk.

The chief therapeutic agent needed for the treatment of tuberculosis is calcium. Milk, being the richest food source for the supply of organic calcium to the body, should be taken liberally. In the dietary outlined above at least one liter of milk should be taken daily. Further periods on the exclusive fruit diet followed by fruit and milk diet should be adopted at intervals of two or three months depending on the progress. During the first few days of the treatment, the bowels should be cleansed daily with the warm-water enema and afterwards as necessary. The patient should avoid all devitalized foods such as white bread, white sugar, refined cereals, puddings and pies, tinned, canned and preserved foods. He should also avoid strong tea, coffee, condiments, pickles, sauces, etc.

The custard apple is regarded as an effective food remedy for tuberculosis. It is said to contain the qualities of rejuvenating drugs. The Ayurvedic practitioner prepares a fermented liquor called sitaphalasava from the custard apple in its season for use as medicine in the treatment of tuberculosis. It is prepared by boiling custard apple pulp and seedless raisins in water on slow fire. It is filtered when about one third of water is left. It is then mixed with powdered sugar and candy and also the powder of cardamom, cinnamon and certain other condiments. Indian gooseberry has proved to be an effective remedy for tuberculosis. A tablespoonful each of fresh amla juice and honey mixed together should be taken every morning in this condition. Its regular use will promote vigor and vitality in the body within a few days. Regular use of radish is also beneficial.

The patient should take complete rest of both mind and body. Any type of stress will prevent healing. Fresh air is always important in curing the disease and the patient should spend most of the time in the open air and should sleep in a well-ventilated room. Sunshine is also essential as

tuber bacilli are rapidly killed by exposure to sun rays. Other beneficial steps towards curing the disease are avoidance of strain, slow massage, deep breathing and light occupation to ensure mental diversion.

Water Treatment

Certain water treatments are helpful in cases of tuberculosis. The patient's vital resistance can be built up by a carefully planned graduated cold bath routine twice a day. The intensity of the cold applications should be gradually increased to achieve satisfactory results.

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However, care must be taken to keep the patient from catching a chill. A short hot fomentation with alternate short cold application to the chest and back, and in the stomach region or a neutral immersion bath (water temperature 98 ° to 100 ° F) for an hour just before retiring at night is also beneficial.

Certain yogic practices are beneficial in the treatment of tuberculosis in its early stages. These include asanas like viparitarani, sarvangasana and shavasana and jalneti kriya and anuloma-viloma pranayama.

Reference

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

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