Diet and aging: Gaining a nutritional edge

Aging is inevitable. However, healthy and graceful aging is in your hands.

Diet and lifestyle changes can go a long way in easing the process and staving off age related chronic diseases.

New Delhi, Dec 19, 2016: Basic nutrition requirements more or less remain constant throughout one’s life. However, as one ages the nutritional requirements of certain components may increase or decrease. High caloric needs drop as we age and the body requires more carefully sources of essential vitamins and minerals.

Most of age related chronic diseases like osteoporosis, diabetes and heart disease could be actively avoided by following a healthy diet plan. The earlier you adopt a healthy way of life, the better.

Speaking about the importance of a healthy diet, Padma Shri Awardee Dr. K.K Aggarwal, President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and National President Elect Indian Medical Association (IMA), stated that, “First of all bear in mind that as you age, your body’s average daily caloric demand drops, this warrants that high calorie foods like carbohydrates and fats be limited. Whenever possible, use monounsaturated and polyunsaturated oils. Avoid trans fats entirely. Limit saturated fats to less than 7% of daily calories and total fat to 20% to 30% of daily calories. The tip for choosing carbohydrates wisely is to choose whole–grain foods over those made with refined grains, such as white bread. Look beyond popular choices like whole oats and brown rice to lesser–known whole grains like barley, bulgur, kasha, and quinoa. Limit your intake of white potatoes.”

“My formula for ensuring a healthy diet is to consume a mixture of seven colours and six tastes in every meal. Each food colour represents a type of vitamin so red apples are a source of lycopene, green leafy vegetables and fruits provide the body with B complex and orange food items are a source of vitamin C. Similarly the sweet, sour and salt taste promotes weight gain and on the contrary pungent, astringent and bitter tastes reduce weight”, added Dr. K.K Aggarwal.

Proteins also need to be modulated. Consume plant sources of protein, such as beans, nuts, and grains, to help bypass unhealthy fats predominant in animal sources. Enjoying a wide variety of vegetables and eating beans and grains helps you get a full complement of amino acids over the course of a week. Shy away from protein sources high in saturated fat. Favor fish and well–trimmed poultry.

In the end, it is extremely important to couple a healthy aging–friendly diet with ample amounts of physical activity. Opt for a light exercise routine and aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day. Getting a good sleep and staying stress free is crucial, try meditation and
breathing exercises for relaxation.

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About Heart Care Foundation of India

Initiated in 1986, the Heart Care Foundation of India is a leading National NGO working in the field of creating mass health awareness among people from all walks of life and providing solutions for India’s everyday healthcare needs. The NGO uses consumer-based entertainment modules to impart health education and increase awareness amongst people. A leading example of this is the Perfect Health Mela; an annual event started in 1993 that is attended by over 2-3 lakh people each year. The Mela showcases activities across categories such as health education seminars and check-ups, entertainment programs, lifestyle exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and competitions. In addition to this, the NGO conducts programs and camps to train people on the technique of hands only CPR through its CPR 10 mantra for revival after a sudden cardiac arrest. They currently hold three Limca book of world records for the maximum number of people trained in hands-only CPR in one go. Keeping article 21 of the Indian Constitution in mind, which guarantees a person Right to Life, Heart Care Foundation of India has also recently initiated a project called the Sameer Malik Heart Care Foundation Fund to ensure that no one dies of a heart disease just because they cannot afford treatment.

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