

# Hale and hearty

One of the most overused clichés you have probably heard is, “Health is wealth”. It has been used so much that the importance of it has probably been lost. We do not pay heed to our health. Adding extra hours of work, cutting down on sleep, and eating like there is no tomorrow, many of us virtually abuse our bodies. But if your health fails, all other important matters become trivial. The unhealthy diets many of us follow have led to various health problems running rampant. Healthy eating can never be overrated.

## So what is healthy eating?

But what really is healthy eating, you may ask. Tamanna Chowdhury, Principal Dietician, Department of Dietetics, Apollo Hospitals Dhaka provides a specific answer. “When someone’s menu has a good balance in different nutrients, has a rich variety in terms of foods that are eaten in moderation, then that person can be said to be following a healthy diet,” she says.

Tamanna also warns that a generalised statement regarding diets ought not to be taken for granted. Each person has different problems and needs; the goal of your diet is probably not the same as that of the man sitting next to you.

Saima Siddiqua, Nutritionist at Cosmetic Surgery Centre, also

meals into one will result in a lower calorie consumption. Saima discourages this habit. “In most cases, you will end up eating more,” she asserts.

Crash diets are also not a good option. “These kinds of diets are unwise to follow. Indeed, you may end up losing some weight drastically, but this will not be sustainable,” she adds.

A low-carb, high-protein diet works great. Limit how much rice you are consuming, but that does not mean that you should stop having rice altogether. One cup (of around 250ml) for lunch and two pieces of ‘roti’ at dinner may be opted for – however, before you go for the details, consulting a dietician is extremely important: as we said before, one size does not fit all.

monopoly of overweight people! Fried food and red meat are therefore to be kept in check even if you want to gain weight, and if your cholesterol has gone off the charts, red meat and fatty foods are your worst enemies.

Regardless of weight, high cholesterol is quite a ubiquitous problem. Tamanna puts this in the proper context. “It is about the comprehensive lipid profile: good cholesterol (HDL), bad cholesterol (LDL) and triglyceride,” she said. “Consumption of extra virgin olive oil, green tea, lemon juice and vegetables are said to have a positive effect on improving HDL. To cut down on LDL, exercising, like walking, is mandatory. Fatty foods like egg yolk and red meat must be avoided. To lower your triglyceride level, curb your carbohydrate intake. You might not be overweight, but if your

for prolonged periods or do not eat between major meals that suffer from this problem,” Tamanna informed. “Go for a 10-minute brisk walk after a major meal. Drink water 30 minutes after you are done eating, not immediately after. Learn how to manage stress and sleep well,” she advises.

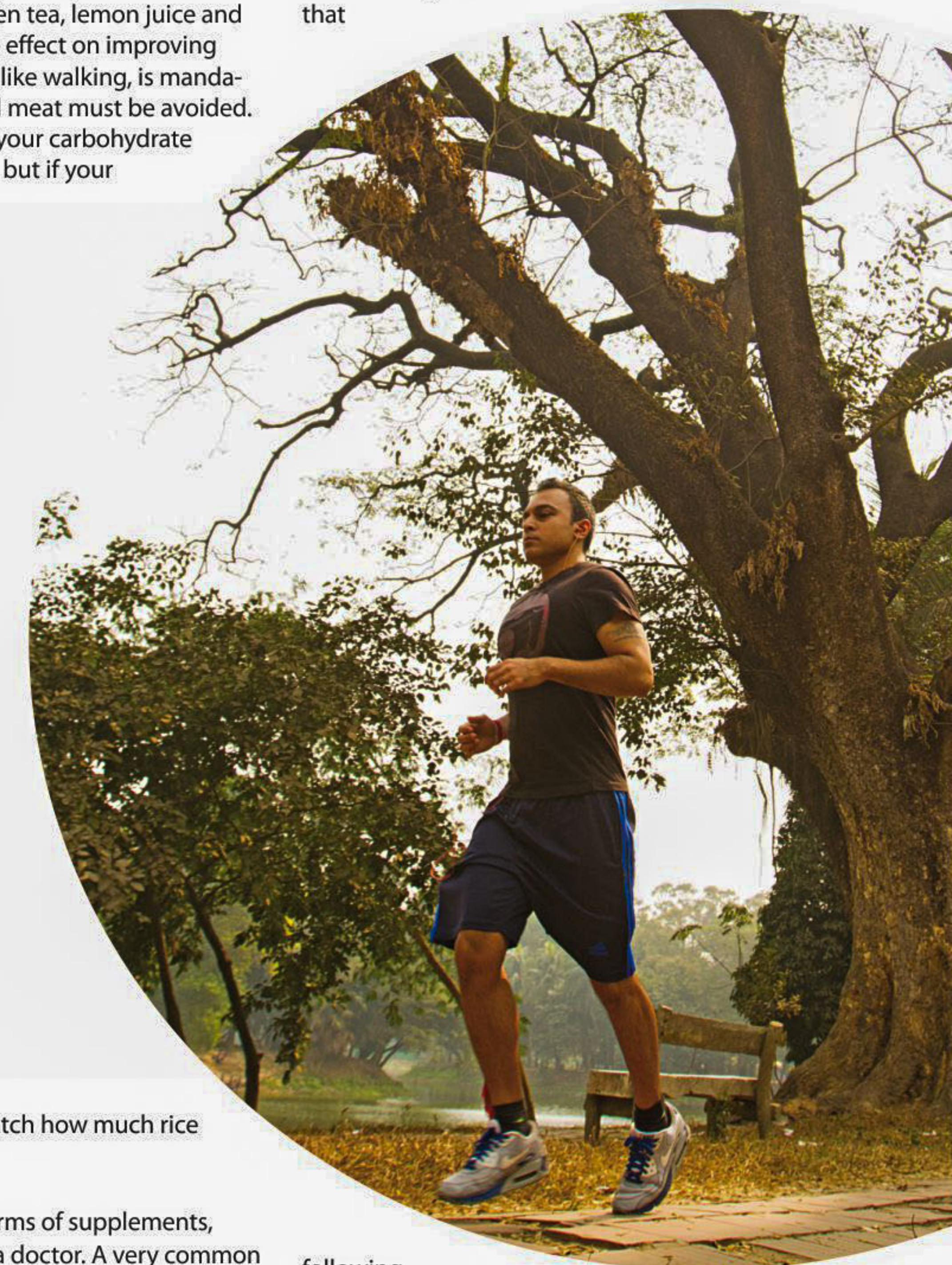
Another overused cliché about health: “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.” We cannot guarantee that



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agrees. “Your ideal diet depends on your age, sex, work – whether your job involves some physical activity or whether you sit in front of the computer all day – your medical history and many other things,” she says.

## The world’s most common new year’s resolution

The principal objective of a diet is to lose weight. Avoid red meat (like beef and mutton) and sweets, including artificial sweeteners, at all costs. Foods high in fats must be kept to a minimum.

Tamanna believes that a holistic approach should be adopted. “Exercising, dieting and avoiding stress are three very important things to look out for,” she informs. “Stress can result in a slow metabolism rate and may also cause hormonal changes.”

You will also become prone to stress eating. One idea many of us are tempted to follow is to skip breakfast and have an early lunch, somehow believing that combining two

## Weight up!

On the other hand, some of us might need to gain some weight. Weight management does not mean weight loss; it can also mean the need to gain weight.

The tactics of weight gain are not the opposite of that of weight loss. Indeed, you may be required to consume more carbohydrates, but you still need to mind eating fried food and red meat.

Tamanna suggests some foods. “Gear up on good proteins and carbohydrates. You may eat some more rice, noodles and potatoes. I sometimes prescribe ‘bhaater maar’, perhaps with lemon and lentils as add-ons. This is something that cancer patients are given to drink because this disease makes people lose weight. Among fruits, bananas are rich in calories.”

## Curbing cholesterol

You will see a lot of people who seem grievously thin have a high level of cholesterol. Cardiac problems are not the

triglyceride is higher than normal, watch how much rice you are eating.”

## Add-ons required?

A lot of us pop pills and take other forms of supplements, sometimes even without consulting a doctor. A very common supplement that many people take is calcium. But do you actually need it? Supplements are not something that you can consume casually. Saima shared her view about supplements. “First, your doctor can tell you whether your body lacks any particular nutrient or not. After identifying it, I suggest filling that void through natural food sources. Only if they are unavailable or if the person is suffering from a deficiency would I prescribe supplements.”

## Tick tock

The most common reason for gastric is irregularity. The clock is very important if you want to prevent gastric. “It is those people who skip breakfast, have late night dinners, do not eat

following this precept will make you wealthy or wise, but it will make you healthy for sure! It is your overall lifestyle that will decide how healthy and fit you are. And an integral part of it is the food you consume. So watch what you eat!

By M H Haider

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Model: Karim Waheed

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