

CHECK IT OUT

Effective weight management: the solution lies in your DNA

Ever wonder what makes you look like your parents and siblings and makes you behave like them? The answer lies in the fact that every human body has a unique set of inherited chemical makeup known as DNA that affects how our body looks and functions.

These inherited genes also influence a person's chances of weight gain and often lead them to becoming obese. This is due to the various roles played by genes in energy homeostasis, with a tendency of fat storage and absorption, body's response to physical activity, etc.

Studies show that obesity might run in the family and that genetic inheritance influences a person's chance of becoming fat - more than any other factor. Within families, there is about an 80 percent chance that if both the parents are obese - and a 50 per cent chance if one parent is obese - the child will be prone to obesity.

However, even slim parents can have obese children or vice-versa. This is due to mutation in the genetic coding of the adipocytes (fat cells), which regulates lipogenesis, lipolysis (fat breakdown in the

body) and thermogenesis (burning calories to produce heat).

DNA testing has evolved from being used only for research to now being used for the general population in order to help improve their lives by managing their challenges with weight, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

In recent years, there has been identification of different genes that control and modify energy utilisation, insulin secretion, fat absorption and storage in the body, carbohydrate metabolism, the effect of different forms of physical activity in weight loss, etc.

Every human being has a unique genetic constitution (which includes variations/mutations). Therefore, routine weight loss diets, or for that matter exercise, may not have the necessary effect on weight loss. For instance, a general recommendation suggesting aerobic exercise in combination with a certain diet to facilitate weight loss may not work.

General guidelines for a healthy existence may not be uniformly appropriate for every-

one and one size may not fit all. Lifestyle and behavioural recommendations based on an individual's DNA profile can vary significantly from the conventional dietary recommendations for people of the same age and gender. Thus, there has been a paradigm shift in the very definition of a balanced diet, which may differ for each individual.

VLCC is a pioneer in weight loss solutions. And for the first time in Asia, it has launched DNA Slim, which is a DNA-based weight management programme. It offers individualised solutions keeping the uniqueness of the person in mind. It helps identify the appropriate diet and exercise patterns that are tailored to a particular individual which would help the person lose/ manage body weight in a more scientific manner.

Each of us has a unique DNA make-up which determines our propensity to gain or lose weight. It is this difference in the genetic structure which explains why two individuals enrolling for the same slimming package sometimes obtain different results from it even if their body composition, lifestyles, and dietary habits are more or less

similar.

DNA Slim is a custom-fit solution for those who have been seeking a scientific, individualised weight management programme that offers efficacious and sustainable results. To illustrate, a person with a mutation in a particular gene will respond well to a low carbohydrate diet, lose weight faster and also be able to maintain the lost weight with a macro nutrient distribution that comprises of 40 percent carbohydrates, 30 percent proteins and 30 percent fats - rather than the traditional advice of a 55 percent carbohydrates in the daily diet.

A simple cheek swab at a VLCC centre is all it takes.

Genetic nutritional analysis can unlock the secret to how an individual responds to certain nutrients and activities, and this knowledge can be used to design a customised programme for weight loss. If something is right for your body, it will be easier to follow, and you will have a greater chance of keeping the weight off for healthier living.

By Vandana Luthra, Founder, VLCC Group

YOGA

No part-time Buddhas

I recently read a book with some wonderful messages, some of which I would like to share with you. All of these messages have been gathered from 'The Heart of Buddha's Teaching' by Thich Nhat Hanh; I have simply compiled and condensed it for your arm-chair pleasure.

SUFFERING

Without suffering, there is no growth, no peace, no joy. Suffering is the means by which the Buddha used to liberate himself. Because there is pain in your heart, you may approach the Buddha for help, for he too had pain in his heart. If you have experienced hunger, you know the miracle of food. If you have suffered the cold, you know the preciousness of warmth. Embrace your suffering and let it reveal to you the way of peace.

FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

Dukkha. Suffering. We all have some malaise in body and mind.

Samudaya. Cause. Look deeply to identify the spiritual and material food you ingest that causes your suffering.

Nirodha. Cessation. Refrain from consuming the nutrients that cause your suffering.

Marga. Path. Mindfulness and the Noble 8-Fold* path leads to refraining.

Nutrients we ingest that cause us to suffer

What we consume: food/ smoke/ drinks/ etc.

Sense impressions: toxins from the external world, such as media, events happening to us that make us feel anxious, sad, craving,

and fearful, rather than light and at peace.

Intentions or desires: we may believe we need x, y, z to be happy, but this belief itself is what confounds our happiness, what we really need is mindfulness to enjoy life in the present moment.

Consciousness: thoughts - disempowering or negative thoughts cause us to suffer, we must train our minds to think only of love, compassion, joy and equanimity, we must be mindful and present.

NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Right view, Right thinking, Right speech,

If you have experienced hunger, you know the miracle of food. If you have suffered the cold, you know the preciousness of warmth. Embrace your

Right action, Right livelihood, Right diligence, Right mindfulness, Right concentration, Mindfulness

Practice mindful walking and deep listening. Be open. Open mind, open heart. We need the energy of mindfulness to recognise and be present with our habit energy (vashana) to stop this course of destruction. We need to stop the horse of our habit energy from galloping on and reclaim our liberty. Be mindful to be free.

* Buddha is mindful all the time, not part of the time. There is no part-time Buddha.

*Anxiety is the inability to dwell in the present moment.

*Letting go gives us freedom and freedom is the only condition for happiness.

*To arrive at liberation from narrow views and fears, practice contemplating on interdependence, impermanence and compassion.

*Gift - Give your full attention, your true presence to someone, your stability, your freedom, your freshness. Especially your children!

*If you listen deeply with calmness and compassion to someone, you can relieve their suffering.

*Recognise, identify, accept your emotions, both good and bad, with love, as a

mother does a child.

*Five remembrances - it is in our nature to grow old, get sick, die, lose everyone we love. Our actions are our only true belongings.

*There are two truths. The relative and the absolute.

*You cannot run away from home, you carry your family within you.

*The third door of liberation is aimlessness. You do not have to do anything, just BE. There is nothing to attain.

BODY SCAN

A body scan is a meditative practice in

which you breathe into different parts of your body. Breathing in, observe a part of your body. Breathing out, smile at that part of your body. Start at the toes and work your way up. The love and care of this meditation is healing.

Here are some other combinations you can contemplate when breathing in and out for meditation. Breath in. Breath out. / Breath in deep. Breath out slow. / Breath in calm. Breath out ease. / Breath in present moment. Breath out wonderful moment.

When we are trying to meditate, we may be interrupted by two types of thoughts -

Vitarka - an initial thought
Vichara - a developing thought

INTERDEPENDENCE

When you look at a flower, see how it is interconnected and interdependent on everything. A flower is a composite of sunshine, clouds, time, space, earth, minerals. When you wear a shirt, see that you are interdependent on everything. The shirt was made by someone in a factory, using cloth someone grew in a farm that was then transported by a ship full of sailors, etc. When someone serves you a coffee, think of that person's effort in making the beverage, the milk that was milked from a cow, the beans that were collected from a farm, etc.

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