

## INTERPRETER OF MALADIES

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# Addiction: the silent catastrophe

Addiction is a common problem that silently haunts many families around the world. Ignorance, secrecy and social stigma make this problem worse with consequent shame and isolation. Addiction is often defined as a pathological relationship with an external mood-altering agent despite all the negative consequences it brings.

A wide range of emotions are normal human experiences. Emotions are the most primitive, relatively inert survival tools which come into action quite intuitively. Emotions are often perceived as good or bad depending on the physical response they produce. Broadly speaking constraining feelings (e.g. tightness in chest experienced in anxiety) are often perceived as bad as opposed to expanding feelings (e.g. chest opening in joy). Feelings are also perceived as good or bad depending on how we interpret the physical response to it (e.g. when the heart beats faster in fear, the brain can interpret it as impending heart attack leading to additional panic). Addiction is a faulty coping mechanism to deal with difficult emotions.

People use different kinds of coping mechanisms to deal with difficult emotions. Feelings and thoughts kick in independent of each other in response to an internal (e.g. memories) or external (e.g. getting fired from job) environmental trigger, they can then form a vicious cycle (e.g. panic attack) in absence of conscious intervention. Uncomfortable or negative emotions like boredom, loneliness, lack of pleasure, low self-esteem etc. can drive people to seek instant gratification to change the mood. Once they start regulating the mood with external objects, they develop a strong bond or relationship (explained by Pavlov's Condition Reflex) with that object and rely on it (albeit unconsciously!) to feel better.

When we talk about addiction, we tend to only think of illicit drug use. Ironically, humans can develop addiction

to many other apparently benign objects like shopping, sex, video games etc. to escape reality and live in a bubble of "good feelings." It is hard to draw the line when it becomes addiction because these are not illicit activities and are used by a lot of people without experiencing any negative consequences.

Shopping can be a way to lift mood and get "highs" from adrenaline rush by spending money and possessing new objects. It won't be considered as addiction for the rich and wealthy who can afford it without any negative consequences whereas the same behaviour may prove to be addictive for someone who gets into serious debt quickly because of it.

Interestingly the pathology of addiction can still be identified by the impulsive urge to buy unnecessary things (sometimes people buy things they never use!) and then suffer from guilt and shame around it, tend to hide it from others, lie or make up stories to defend the behaviour etc. Unfortunately, consumerism ("shop till you drop!!") is highly promoted in today's materialistic lifestyle. Addiction is also a disease of lifestyle devoid of spirituality. Spirituality is allowing the conscious mind (mindfulness) to break unhealthy patterns.

Shopaholics who don't hoard, tend to give away things regularly to others which is rather helpful to the poor and needy. A healthy society cherishes them as kind and generous. On the contrary, shopaholics who tend to hoard, live in a filthy situation packed with stuff. They cling to the objects as they cling to memories, and cannot let go. The sooner the shopaholic comes to senses the better, otherwise nature has its own way of preserving health and aborting pathology! Be spiritual, be mindful of your action and consequences.

Photo: Collected



FYI

## Road to a sound and healthy heart

Does the sight of a cheesy, gooey burger or the mere mention of pizza make you drool in anticipation? And, have you ever wondered how your poor heart, pumping blood to all parts of your body, reacts to these cravings?

Heart attacks, blocks and other complications are reaching unprecedented levels. It has been found in recent studies that every year about 17.7 million people die of heart attacks, accounting for 31% of all global deaths. As lives get busier and more competitive, people often can't eat healthy and have to rely on processed food, leading to heart problems. In today's digital era, as more people get hooked to digital innovations, physical activities are becoming scarcer. As a result, heart diseases are on the rise.

Well, maintaining a healthy heart is not anything monumental. It does not require extreme dedication. All you need to do is follow some simple tips that can be included in your daily lives and keeping your heart healthy easily coincides with your everyday life.

**Eat healthy-** cut down on your intake of saturated fats. These increase the LDL (bad cholesterol) levels in your body, leading to blocked arteries. Eat more fruits and vegetables.

**Eat more fish-** omega 3 in fish help to ward off heart diseases.

**Exercise regularly-** our busy schedules don't leave much time for exercise, but you don't have to exercise for HOURS! When at office, use the stairs instead of the lift, to

help burn calories. After getting home, walk for 30 minutes, and that is enough. Working parents with small children can simply play a small game of hide and seek or 'tag-it' with their kids and this can serve as good exercise. One can also opt for morning walks to maintain a healthy heart.

**Kick your housework up a notch-** vacuuming or mopping the floors may not be as fun as a Body Slam or Zumba classes. But these activities and other household chores do get you moving. They can give your heart a little workout. Put your favourite music on and add some pep to your step while you complete your weekly chores.

**Eat dark chocolate-** next time you have your sweet craving, eat dark chocolate. It contains heart-healthy flavonoids that help reduce inflammation and lower the risk of heart disease.

**Eat more nuts-** almonds, walnuts, pecans, and other tree nuts deliver a powerful punch of heart-healthy fats, protein, and fibre. Including them in your diet can help lower your risk of cardiovascular disease

**Quit smoking-** smoking is one of the major causes of heart diseases. The nicotine present in cigarettes blocks arteries, leading to heart attacks.

**Cut down on stress-** stress and anxiety have been found to cause heart diseases. Do yoga or meditation to reduce stress.

By Faiza Khondokar

# Dr. Jhumu Khan's Laser Medical

## Trimming YOUR TUMMY

### Why **Ultracontour** is superior to other treatments

- ◆ No pain ◆ No surgery ◆ No bleeding
- ◆ No Anesthesia ◆ No scar ◆ More efficiency

Dual therapeutic **Ultracontour** has unique 2 features:

**HiFU FOCAL ULTRASOUNDS** have 3 major effects on FAT CELLS:

1. De-polymerisation or molecular dissociation of the tri-glyceride and increase their fluidity;
2. Lipolysis or ejection of fat acid outside of adipocyte is made via the stable cavitation phenomena and by the increase of the permeability of the adipocyte;
3. Defibrosis by mechanical action of the connective tissue in the hypodermis;



### UMD ULTRASOUNDS to treat fat liberates in the interstitial tissue:

It helps in evacuation of the waste immediately after FOCAL session, using natural lymphatic drainage. Dual therapeutic **Ultracontour** combined to stimulation of the lymphatic system enhance results and provide advantageous effect in long term results.



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