

SUNDAY

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Taking a rain check on diabetes? 6 tips to keep your blood sugar levels in control during monsoon season

Countless cups of chai, piping hot pakoras & listening to music while gazing outside the window, these are a few things that have become synonymous with monsoon, the season that always casts a spell on us. While the season oozes nostalgia for some, it can be difficult for others, especially for people with health conditions like diabetes. Some prepare for the season by stocking up with enough umbrellas and taking their yellow raincoats out of retirement. However, people with diabetes must have a game plan ready on how to best navigate the season while managing the lifestyle disease.

Here's what the expert says

Dr. Abhijit Bhograj, Endocrinologist, says, "For people living with diabetes, the onset of monsoon signals the arrival of a host of infections like the flu and waterborne diseases. These can affect their immune system and lead to other health problems, making this a particularly challenging time. People with diabetes must take extra care and follow preventative steps to avoid health concerns and glucose fluctuations during this time and stay healthy. Therefore, monitoring is extremely vital during the rainy season, and this can be supported through solutions like continuous glucose monitoring (CGM)."

"During this season, it becomes extremely important that people with diabetes not take a raincheck on regular monitoring. Additionally, one must try to keep their blood sugar level in check. This can be easily done using tools like SMBG/continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) devices, which don't involve finger pricking to give you glucose level insights. Such devices have metrics like Time in Range, which indicates the amount of time in a day that one's glucose levels stay within a specified range. Checking your readings more often is also associated with more time spent in this optimal range, which can improve your glucose control," he adds.

Here are a few tips on how to enjoy the monsoon season while managing your diabetes this year:

Include immunity-boosting foods in your diet

Diabetes can compromise your immunity. Therefore, while it may be tempting to



eat at your local street food vendor's, people with diabetes should avoid outside to limit being exposed to waterborne diseases. Stick to home-cooked meals enriched with immunity-boosting and antioxidant-rich foods, while staying away from raw food. This can lower your risk of contracting infections or diseases at this time. Additionally, make sure to properly wash leafy vegetables that could host worms or bacteria.

Keep your feet dry

According to Dr. Bhograj, "People with diabetes must take extra care of their feet

during this season. Feet care 101 should include washing one's feet after being exposed to rain and the infections that could come with it. You should also carry an extra pair of socks as getting your feet wet is more of an eventuality than a probability. Wear comfortable shoes that are dry and clean to avoid fungal infections (and don't walk through puddles)".

Regularly monitor blood sugar levels

As you may change your everyday exercise or diet routines during this season, checking your glucose levels frequently is a must. Fortunately, there are more ways to do this. Wearable CGM devices, like FreeStyle Libre for instance, can provide you real-time access to your glucose readings. You should try to stay in the optimal glucose range (commonly 70 – 180 mg/dl) for about 17 out of the 24 hours each day. In this way, you can manage your diabetes, come rain or shine.

Don't skip on exercise

"The rainy season brings with it the feeling of wanting to sit and relax at home. However, people with diabetes must remain active and maintain a consistent exercise routine. While some outdoor options may be unavailable due to the rain, you can always try a low intensity workout indoors. A short 30-minute workout or daily morning walk indoors, for example, can help immensely in maintaining blood-sugar levels," says Dr. Bhograj.

Stay Hydrated

Even though water is everywhere during the monsoons, that doesn't mean your body is automatically getting hydrated. Humidity coupled with heat that is the signature of Indian monsoons can lead to dehydration. People with diabetes should ensure that they are consuming an adequate amount of water.

Protect your eyes

"Moisture in the air makes it easy for eye infections to travel. Therefore, people with diabetes must be careful to touch one's eyes only after washing their hands. If possible, wear protective glasses if you are getting soaked in the rain. Make sure to have regular eye checkups to rule out diabetic retinopathy," advises Dr. Bhograj.

How to know if you're mistaking child abuse with discipline

When it comes to parenting, disciplining children is an integral part of the journey. Parents take it upon themselves to raise well-behaved, well-mannered kids who are loved and respected by all. Therefore, in a bid to teach appropriate behaviors to children, parents resort to different measures, some of which prove effective, while others go on to do more harm than good.

Having said that, parents must be able to identify the thin line that exists between discipline and child abuse. To do that, you must first understand what abuse is and the different types that can harm your child.

What is child abuse?

The Mayo Clinic defines child abuse as any intentional harm or mistreatment to a child under 18 years old. Furthermore, the healthy shares that child abuse can take several forms, which can often occur at the same time.

Types of child abuse to know about

- Physical abuse: Physical abuse occurs when a child experiences physical injuries inflicted intentionally to harm.
- Sexual abuse: Child sexual abuse can be direct or indirect. Direct sexual abuse involves intentional sexual touching, oral-genital contact or intercourse. Indirect sexual abuse involves exposing a child to sexual activity or pornography; observing or filming a child in a sexual manner; sexual harassment of a child; or prostitution of a child, as per Clinic.
- Emotional abuse: Emotional abuse refers to any harm caused to a child's self-esteem.
- Medical abuse: Medical abuse occurs when someone gives false information about a child's illness that requires medical attention.
- Neglect: Child neglect is also a form of abuse where a parent fails to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs.

What makes discipline different from abuse?

Discipline is not something that can be achieved through harsh words, punishment



or spanking. While it may provide you with short term results, in the long run, it may take on a form of abuse, affecting a child's physical and mental health. Discipline, therefore, is all about teaching rules and regulations to kids and following up on the consequences. Abuse on the other hand is when you cross limits to get your way, hurt someone so much that it leads to severe physical, psychological or emotional damage.

What to do instead?

Rather than losing your patience and adhering to negative parenting strategies, take time out to sit back and reflect. Children are innocent and have no intention to hurt. All they want is someone to listen to them and their problems.

As parents, it is important to understand 'why' your child is misbehaving or displaying unruly behavior. Without identifying the triggers, you cannot resolve the issues. This will only cause more frustrations, while distancing you from your child.

Effective discipline strategies to adopt

There are many effective strategies that do not involve any punishments, hitting or spanking. These include:

Positive discipline focuses on building mutual respect between the parent and the child. It does not involve abandoning the child in times of need, rather showing kindness and helping them resolve their issues.

Gentle discipline involves using humor and distraction to help prevent kids from misbehaving. This way the parent avoids yelling and punishing the child.

Boundary-based discipline is all about setting and establishing clear rules and boundaries.

Behavior modification believes in conditioning the child to behave by measures such as praising and rewarding good behavior.

Emotion coaching is a strategy that helps parents stay connected with their children. It necessitates that parents show empathy and support to the children, while teaching them to express their feelings and needs.

5 reasons why having a dog can improve your overall health



Dogs are often referred to as man's best friend, and for a very good reason. Their comforting presence can make one feel very happy and content. Having a dog with you at all times can give you the feeling of having a best friend by your side, in good and bad times. Not only are they loyal, loving companions, but they can also provide a range of health benefits.

Improved mental health

Having a dog can help improve your mental health in a number of ways. Studies have shown that pet owners have lower levels of stress and anxiety than those who don't own pets. Dogs can also provide emotional support and companionship, which can be especially beneficial for those who live alone. Additionally, spending time with a dog can help reduce feelings of loneliness and depression.

Increased physical activity

Having a dog can help you stay active. Dogs need to be taken for regular walks, which can help you get the recommended amount of daily physical activity. Additionally, playing with your dog can help you stay active and burn calories. Walks with your dog can be a bonding time for both of you.

Improved heart health

Studies have shown that owning a dog can help reduce the risk of heart disease. This is likely due to the fact that dog owners tend to be more active and have lower levels of stress. Having a dog can help lower your blood pressure and cholesterol.

Lower risk of allergies

Research has shown that children who grow up with a dog in the home are less likely to develop allergies. This is probably because canines can assist in reducing the number of allergens in the house. In addition, exposure to pet dander or tiny skin flakes can help children develop a stronger immune system.

Improved social interactions

Having a dog can also help you meet new people. Taking your dog for walks can give you the opportunity to meet other dog owners and start conversations. Furthermore, having a dog can make you more approachable, which can help you make new friends. This can improve your mental health since you will be surrounded by new people who might make you happy.

