

## AVOID JUNK FOOD

The consumption of junk food has risen significantly in recent years, and it has several negative consequences for individuals and public health in general. The availability and accessibility of junk food have increased significantly, leading to higher consumption rates. This trend is often attributed to changing lifestyles and the influence of Western culture. Junk food is often designed to be visually appealing and packed with flavors that stimulate the taste buds. Children, young adults, and even some adults are more likely to consume junk food regularly. Peer pressure, advertising, and convenience often play a role in this demographic preference. Junk food is associated with several health issues, including obesity, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and dental problems. These foods are often calorie-dense but nutrient-poor, leading to excessive calorie intake without providing essential vitamins and minerals.

## Prospect of early assembly elections in J&K gaining momentum

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

It is very encouraging and positive development that centre government has told the supreme court that assembly elections will be announced and conducted any time now .The Solicitor general Tushar Mehta also said that UT status to Jammu and Kashmir is temporary and it may be restored .But the centre government remained non -committal about the timeframe for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir .However SGI said the call for announcing the assembly elections rests with the election commission of India and the UT's election commission .So the authority of announcing and holding the polls in Jammu and Kashmir lies with the election commission .Now the election commission will take the final call about holding the assembly elections .Thus there are enough and clear indications that assembly polls in J&K will be announced and conducted very soon and there is no ambiguity about this and it is very encouraging development and the political parties and the people of Jammu and Kashmir have hailed and welcomed the centers contention of the centre of holding the assembly elections any time now .Thus the political parties ,politicians should gear up for taking part in the assembly elections to give themselves a democratically elected government which will be responsive to the needs ,aspirations and issues of the people of the union territory .Now the election commission should clear decks for announcing and conducting the much overdue assembly elections and announce the schedule of holding elections to the UT so that people of J&K will use their right to vote and elect the democratic government which will come up to the expectations and aspirations of the alienated people by giving them the chance to cast vote and elect new popular and democratic government ,so that the political vacuum and deficit is removed and people are politically and democratically empowered to elect their government which will be responsive to the needs and issues of the people .Jammu and Kashmir cannot be kept under the central rule for an indefinite time as it amounts to the murder of democracy and violation of the rights and liberties of the people .Jammu and Kashmir is under the central rule from the last over five years and as a consequence there is no democratic and popular as well as peoples government in place in Jammu and Kashmir: There is no connect between the alienated and estranged people of the UT and the LG administration and people are orphaned as the administrative secretaries and all most all district collectors are from outside Jammu and Kashmir and they have no feeling about the people and there is trust deficit between the governor's administration and the people .Now when the assembly elections will be conducted ,there will remove trust deficit and the people will have their own government which will address all the issues and problems of the people. .Thus it is expected that the statement of Solicitor General will be implemented on the ground and the democratic process will be initiated very soon to enable the people to cast their valuable vote to elect and install the government of their choice so that the people will be in a position to rule the UT .The fact that centre is ready to hold the assembly elections has come from the horse's mouth and it is a good omen for the people of Jammu and Kashmir who will get the opportunity to use their power of vote to change their destiny by electing and installing a democratically government which in all probability will come up to the expectations of the people who stand denied of their right of vote for the last over five years .it is so good and encouraging that the centre government has finally cleared its decks by announcing that it is ready to hold the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir from any time now .However has maintained that the ECI and SEC will take the final call for announcing and holding the assembly elections in the UT .Now the political ball is in the hands of election commission and it is expected that it will announce and hold the assembly elections of J&K assembly immediately so that the people are politically empowered to cast their vote and elect and install a people's government which will care for the issues and problems of the people .So the ECI and SEC will work in unison and take the final decision of conducting the much overdue assembly elections in the UT ,so that people of this region also will be politically empowered to cast their vote and elect the people's government which will be responsive and transparent .Thus without losing further time ,the ECI should take the final decision of holding the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir .Now after the right decision and comment of the solicitor General before the five judge constitutional bench headed by justice Chandarchud ,the political parties and the political leaders as well as the common citizens are in a upbeat mood as all of them will have the right to cast their ballot and choose the government of their choice which will care for the people and address their day to day problems .It is hoped that the ECI and the SEC will take the final call about the conducting the assembly elections so that the commoner is enabled to vote and elect a democratic and peoples government at the earliest so that the woes of the people are addressed .Political parties ,politicians and the gullible people of the UT have with one voice appreciated the centre government for declaring that it is ready from any time now to hold the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir .This is very important and encouraging that the government of India has made it crystal clear that it is ready for holding the assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir and as such there are no two views about it .The election commission ,whose prerogative and privilege is the announcing and holding the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir will immediately announce the schedule of the polls .Thus before the onset of winter the ECI should announce and hold the assembly elections and thus it should recommend the GOI to conduct the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir and heal the scars and wounds of the alienated people of Jammu and Kashmir who stand denied of exercising their right of vote .To conclude it can be said that the political parties ,politicians and the common citizens should jump in the elections once these are announced and elect the democratic government in Jammu and Kashmir as the gullible people of the erstwhile state are anxiously waiting for the assembly elections and therefore these should be conducted immediately without any further delay.

(The author is a columnist,social and KP activist).

# Childhood obesity: need to stem the tide to get the healthy future ride

■ DR SAMRITI GUPTA



Health comes through long way right from its conception in the mother's womb till the individual lives on earth. Adequate nutrition is the key to good health across all stages of life. However, the most important stage is the first 1000 days of life. Adequate and appropriate nutrition and good health at this stage embark on a healthy future. Considering the large burden of under nutrition as a major public health problem and the importance of the first 1000 days, the Government of India initiated the National Nutrition Mission in 2016 which was later named Poshan Abhiyaan in 2018. The Poshan Maah is celebrated every year in the month of September to strengthen the community to combat malnutrition among children, adolescents, and pregnant women. Despite large-scale efforts of the health sector and government, the recent Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey has reported alarming results with 33% underweight, 17% wasted and 35% stunted children between 0-5 years and 4-8% obese or overweight adolescents. This has led to the need for introspection within us regarding the nutrition we are giving to the current generation.

Obesity- a rising epidemic in children India along with the entire world is currently facing the triple burden of malnutrition- under nutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and obesity. While the leading world health agencies like WHO, UNICEF as well as health ministry in India have been working for years to combat under nutrition, the prevalence is higher. On the other hand, obesity is rising like an epidemic in countries of all strata. The prevalence of obesity among children and adolescents has almost tripled from 4% to 18% between 1975 to 2016 in India. The projected estimate of obese children and adolescents by 2025 is 1.73 crores as per WHO reports if no measures are taken India will be just second to China in terms of childhood obesity. Though a lot of efforts have been taken to identify children with under nutrition and their corrective measures at all levels, no such initiatives have been taken to deal with obesity in children.

What causes childhood obesity? Most of the parents equate overweight children with good health. Lack of awareness and knowledge regarding the consequences of higher weight for height as well as nutritive values of foods among parents and caregivers contribute to more weight gain among small children. Exposure to food items rich in fats, sugars and salts like candies, chocolates, juices, processed foods, chips, cola drinks, burgers and pizzas at early ages contributes to childhood obesity. Indoor activities combined with increased screen time for infants and toddlers lead to a lack of outdoor physical activity and promote sedentary behaviour. All this sets the vicious cycle of more consumption with less utilization of calories and hence leading to childhood obesity.

What harm childhood obesity can do? Childhood obesity sets the foundation stone for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in adulthood. These conditions like hypertension, diabetes mellitus, hyperlipidemia, stroke, and myocardial infarction which were previously thought to be diseases of late adulthood or the elderly population, have now been seen in older children, teenagers, and young adults. Various hormonal disorders like menstrual disorders, hypothyroidism, polycystic ovarian syndrome, and osteoporosis have also been on a rising trend in adolescents and young adults due to the epidemic of obesity. Besides obese children also have more psychological problems.

Tackling childhood obesity with healthy nutrition Individual level

So, what can we do at our own level to keep our children healthy? There are certain tips and tactics that can help to control our child's weight and prevent the chances of being overweight and obese.

► Starting at inception: Good maternal nutrition during the prenatal and entire antenatal period and correction of micronutrient deficiencies like anemia contribute to the baby's good health.

► Breastfeeding: Exclusive Breastfeeding till six months is a boon to a child who is laden with all the nutrients and immunity-boosting factors, resulting in adequate physical growth, brain development and less chance of infection. Also, exclusively breastfed babies have less risk of obesity and other NCDs.

► Complement with feeding: Beyond six months, the child must be initiated on complementary feeding. The right composition, consistency, amount, and timing of complementary feeding is very important to prevent both types of malnutrition in a child. Besides, breastfeeding should be continued till two years of life.

► Concept of balanced diet: In toddlers and school children, the concept of a balanced diet should be included in daily routine. A traffic light plan should be applied for all meals with more consumption of green foods (fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts), and moderate consumption

of yellow foods (cereals, pulses, fats) while avoiding red foods (sweetened drinks, processed foods, fried foods). Their each meal plate should include, 25% cereals, 20% protein-rich food, 50% fresh vegetables and fruits and less than 5% fats. This also applies to older children, adolescents and even adults.

► Avoiding JUNCs: JUNCs include junk foods, ultra-processed foods, nutritionally inappropriate foods, caffeinated or carbonated beverages and sugar-sweetened beverages. These types of foods should be restricted among all ages of children for the prevention of obesity.

► Physical activity: Incorporating 60 minutes of daily moderate to vigorous physical activity is essential to be healthy in all age groups. Age-appropriate exercises and outdoor games should be part of the routine since early childhood.

► Screen time: Exposure to any type of screen time including TV, mobiles, computers, tablets, and video games results in a sedentary lifestyle. Besides watching the screen while eating is associated with uncontrolled snacking and grazing of foods. Watching advertisements of the promotion of junk foods and cola drinks may also result in an inclination towards eating such items. Screen time should be avoided in children <2 years and in children >2 years, it should be restricted to 1-2 hours and too under parental supervision.

► Sleep: Adequate sleep hours appropriate at each age are necessary to promote healthy well-being. Sleep routine and hygiene should be maintained. There should be no screen time at least 1 hour before sleep.

School level

- Health education as a part of the school curriculum
- Regular physical activity during morning assemblies, as well as dedicated time for physical education

- Regular weight, height and BMI monitoring of school children for early recognition of obese as well as at-risk children

- Provision of healthy foods like fruits, and salads in the school canteen or cafeteria
- Banning of junk foods and foods high in sugar and salt content in school premises

- Training of teachers in health education for repeated short workshops Government and administrative level

- Training of ASHA and AWW for anthropometric measurements with ability to recognize overweight and obese children.

- Regular health education and awareness activities for mothers regarding healthy nutrition and physical activity.

- Restriction of marketing and promotion of JUNCs food items.
- Initiatives by Government and healthcare sector to promote healthy eating.

Preventing obesity by opting for healthy food choices and regular physical activity is the best option to control childhood obesity. The responsibility lies jointly among the individuals, families, schools, the healthcare sector, and the government. The data currently points towards the expanding balloon of obese and overweight children in India which needs to be controlled before it bursts. Hence, to save our future, the time to act is NOW!

Do's and Don'ts for prevention of childhood obesity

Do's		Don'ts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>► Exclusive breastfeeding for six months followed by continuation till two years of age</li><li>► Timely initiation (after six months) of complementary feeding with nutritious foods</li><li>► Traffic light eating</li><li>► More consumption of fruits, vegetables, nuts, fibre-rich diet, moderate consumption of cereals, legumes and fats</li><li>► Exercise regularly- 60 minutes daily</li><li>► Spend more time in the outdoors</li><li>► Screen time less than 1-2 hours beyond two years of age</li><li>► Adequate sleep</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>► Do not give formula milk or top milk till six months of life</li><li>► No salt and sugar till one year of life</li><li>► Avoid excessive salt and sugar beyond 1st year of life (candies, chocolates, chips, juices)</li><li>► Avoid junk foods, sweetened and cola drinks, processed foods, street foods</li><li>► Avoid sedentary habits</li><li>► Restrict indoor activities</li><li>► No screen time till 2 years of life</li><li>► No screen time while eating and 1 hour before sleep</li></ul>	

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# Promoting Sweet Revolution in J&K

■ DR. BANARSI LAL

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is said to be one of the most important and suitable beekeeping places in India. This territory is suitable for the stationary and migratory beekeeping because of its favourable climatic conditions and diverse natural sources. Beekeeping with Apis mellifera is popular in Jammu & Kashmir. Beekeepers undertake bees' migration for honey production and there is an immense potential in J&K to improve honey production. Knowledge of floral resources and appropriate migration schedules in different beekeeping regions can increase the quality and quantity of honey. Researchers at the Central Bee Research and Training Institute, Pune studied the floral resources for A. mellifera and suggest various migration schedules for different phytogeographic regions in J&K and also in other parts of the country. Beekeeping has been practised since ancient times in the Union Territory of J&K mainly for the precious honey stored by the bees in combs. It was practised in its simplest form in the forest areas. The indigenous oriental honey bee, Apis cerana, was kept in wall niches, clay pots or other receptacles by the beekeepers. With the introduction of scientific beekeeping, now the bees are kept in wooden boxes and it can be observed across J&K.

Since 1880 efforts are being made to introduce the European bees in India. Modern scientific beekeeping was introduced in India through import of the Italian race of the European honey bee, A. mellifera ligustica, in Langstroth and British Standard hives. The present day A. mellifera colonies in the country have descended from the successfully introduced colonies during the sixth decade of the last century. Side by side with the development apiculture is using the indigenous bee, A. cerana, apiculture using the European bee gained popularity. Introduction of A. mellifera bee species has revolutionized beekeeping and honey production industry in the Union Territory of J&K. There are many attributes that make A. mellifera more successful and better suited than the indigenous bees for commercial beekeeping. Its worker bees are larger than those of A. cerana, and have larger foraging range and high forage carrying capacity. But A. mellifera need plentiful floral sources and cannot survive in the regions with scant supply of pollen and nectar. It has been observed that A. mellifera beekeeping has made rapid progress and production of honey from the last few years in J&K. Beekeepers of J&K need new vegetation regions to keep the bees' colonies for production and they need information on the availability of pollen and nectar from different plants species. One of the important constraints for progress of A. mellifera beekeeping is the scanty information available on their floral resources. Commercial beekeeping with A. mellifera honey yield can be

increased in J&K by adopting migration as a regular management practice. Migration is important because (i) the bee adopt well to farms and orchards with large areas under a single crop; (ii) the colonies need a large amount of pollen and nectar for their survival and growth and (iii) productive efficiency can be achieved only when a large number of colonies are maintained in an apiary in good strength. It is difficult to get adequate bee forage throughout the year in one location. Thus, it is necessary for mellifera beekeepers to have detailed information on the availability of different floral sources near their apiaries, seasons of their availability and migration schedules for optimal utilization of the available floral resources. The migration of bee colonies from forests in hills to farms and orchards in the adjacent plains in order to utilize the local bee flora and improve bee forage availability to bee colonies has been observed by the researchers. It has also been observed that migratory beekeeping in the hilly areas enhances honey production and colony multiplication. Migration is an important beekeeping practice for A. mellifera.

Mustard, gram, eucalyptus, shisham, berseem, toria, maize, citrus, guava, cucurbits etc., are the crops which are preferred by the bee colonies. Migratory beekeeping in the Union Territory of J&K helps to maximize honey yields. Bees choose certain migratory routes for honey production and colony multiplication. The natural flora of J&K forests is more varied than many other parts of the country. Union Territory of J&K has vast geographical area, varying climate from temperate to tropical, torrid to arctic and from total aridity to a maximum of humidity. Forests cover about 19.95 per cent of the area in J&K. Large quantities of deodar, fir, toon, teak and other trees are grown for timber. Several of these species provide forage to honey bees. India's forest land shrinks each year because people cut more trees than they plant. The government encourages planting mostly of fast growing eucalyptus and pine. Recently karanj is also grown for bio-fuel. Eucalyptus and karanj also provide bee forage. A. mellifera beekeeping is mainly dependent on cultivated and agricultural crops. A little over 70 per cent of cultivated land is under food grains including rice, wheat, jowar, bajra, maize, gram and other pulse crops. Oilseed crops like toria, mustard etc. are grown in the Union Territory of J&K and are very useful to honey bees. Among other commonly cultivated plant species useful to honey are mango, lemon, apple, orange, plum, litchi, pear, peach, cherry, jamun, fodder legumes, coriander, fenel, fennegreek, onion and other spices and condiment crops. Road-side plantations that contribute to honey production include eucalyptus, karanj, gulmohr, hedges and fence plants like Duranta, mulberry, Justicia and Jatropa also add to the bee forage value of farms and

orchards.

Jammu region has large areas under litchi orchards that constitute an excellent source of nectar during March to May. Litchi tree is an important source of nectar for honey bees. Agricultural crops are seasonal and provide bee forage for limited periods only. Bee colonies cannot be sustained throughout the year in any cultivated area, unless it has an integrated intensive agriculture, agro-forestry and social forestry systems. During the forage scarcity periods between two crop seasons, bee colonies will have to be moved to another area. Thus, the beekeeping potential for the cultivated vegetation becomes a part of the potential contained in the natural vegetation. In the Union Territory of J&K, Apis mellifera beekeeping is now well established and beekeepers generally undertake migration as a matter of course. White honey of Ramban has gained popularity and needs promotion. It is distinct not only in its colour and taste but also has its medicinal properties. There is an ample scope for migration to enhance honey production in J&K by adopting appropriate migration schedules for apiaries in different locations. In J&K there are many success stories of honey beekeepers. They have established various beekeeping units at their farms and earning a good amount of money. They are benefitting the other farmers of J&K to increase their crops production as the honey bees help to increase the crops production by the pollination process. In Jammu and Kashmir, colonies from Jammu can be migrated to locations around or near Srinagar for Robinia pseudoacacia during March-April. This species is dependable source of nectar and colonies can produce surplus honey. It has been observed that honey yield increases from 40 to 80 kg/colony/season by this species. In J&K, the colonies are situated in different locations in the plains where mustard and toria are cultivated. During the severe cold in January, the colonies perform well even when they get very short foraging time between 1100 to 1500 h. In the months of February and March colonies get flows from mustard and eucalypts. Honey yield can be increased in September from Citrus spp. In J&K, mustards and eucalypts flower later; i.e., in February-March. Colonies can therefore be taken to areas for flow from mustards, shisham and eucalypts. Colonies can then be migrated to litchi growing areas in March-April for the main flow from litchi. Union Territory of J&K possesses a variety of crops and tree species and thus present good opportunities for migratory beekeeping. Migration should be a common beekeeping practice for beekeepers who kept A. mellifera. It is possible to increase honey production further by optimal utilization of the floral resources available in J&K.

(The writer is Sr. Scientist & Head of KVK, Reasi (SKUAST-J)).

## YOUR COLUMN

### Benefits of Space Research

Dear Editor;

I am sure you would know about Apollo 11-The first human landing on moon, Sputnik-1-the first artificial satellite of the world, Chandrayaan-3-The first landing on the moon's south pole and many more satellites which not only have studied the Earth and the moon but also have studied Sun and various planets, constellations, and other objects. But the question arises do you know about the benefit of space research? That's why I am writing this essay to make you aware about the benefits of space research.

Starting with the most important point for which the most of the missions are being launched -EXISTENCE OF LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS there is a very simple solution to that; existence of water in liquid form and an atmosphere with a mixture of

life supporting gases can be a habitat to lives in different forms like microbial form etc. and a recent study shows that aliens could feed on cosmic rays and that's why missions are being launched to find life in either form because if because of the growing population of the world a planet where life exists can be an another abode to the humans.

A finding by NASA- Kepler-452b a planet beyond our solar system present in the constellation of Cygnus which takes 385 days to revolve around its star that is 20 days more than Earth and it is a little warmer than Earth and if water exists on this planet this could be a great finding for the human generation. Some instances of missions launched to study the distant planets are Voyager 1 an initiative by NASA which was programmed to flyby Jupiter and Saturn exceeded expectations by travelling into the interstellar space out of our solar system but unfortunately its camera ability was disconnected but it contains tapes of humanity which could be seen by another life form if it is present outside of our solar sys-

tem. Another benefit of space research is for protecting humanity.

For ex. Many satellites are orbiting the Earth and inform their respective space stations if an asteroid, meteoroid comes near Earth mostly their destroyed by the atmosphere of Earth but some that are bigger in size can come and fall on the Earth. The last benefit is if you can't find life because of only one element necessary for life is found produce the second element to make life possible there.

For ex. Mars has polar ice caps and liquid water also we don't know that if it is drinkable but NASA is planning to send a crewed flight spacecraft to mission to Mars ahead of this NASA has made that area almost liveable by an initiative-MOXIE a microwave sized rover which was sent to Mars for producing oxygen but it produced double of the oxygen that NASA had thought of. In conclusion I would say that the growing world of AI in no time will clear all the myths of the Universe.

Raja Harteshvan Singh Pargal.