

## Nutrition

### 'Let food be your medicine'

# Gonet's diet cleanses system

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**A**n artichoke a day keeps high sugar levels away, and chewing and swishing will help, says a dietitian.

Maria Gonet, Weight Control and Clinical Nutrition Consultant at Altaf Al-Essa Counseling Services in Salmiya, said she has developed a herbal diet to cleanse the system and a diet of vegetables and fruits, including grapefruits, artichokes, string beans and bitter gourds, that is good for diabetic patients.

"The whole diet is designed to support the pancreas to produce its own insulin" she said, adding that artichokes contain insulin.

"Cucumber juice, garlic and onion can lower sugar" she added.

Chewing is also important, Gonet said, because saliva contains an enzyme which breaks down complicated sugars to simple sugars. Swallowing food in a hurry means the important function of saliva is bypassed.

"Chew foods and swish drinks, especially those with sugar," she said.

"The disease is a nutritional imbalance in the system; an excess of toxicity from the wrong eating habits, pollution and stress — but number 1, wrong eating habits," she said.

"This inadequate amount of nutrients or imbalance between them creates an imbalance that has symptoms," she said.

Gonet said not all cases of diabetes are due to overeating or eating the wrong types of foods, but over-

indulgence in sweets certainly is a contributing factor. "Look at all the sweets they have here", she said "the pancreas cannot deal with it!"

"Young people all know fast food, pepsi and coke are no good, but they still drink it," she said. Gonet said not to deprive children of "junk" food, but allow it in moderation along with a healthy diet.

"Make children aware from now, before they become abusers of food" she said, adding that children that have a high intake of sugar cannot behave, cannot sit, and cannot learn, she said.

"The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) said the stomach is the centre of all diseases and diet is the king of remedies," Gonet said, "and God entrusted the human body to us to take care of it, but we take better care of our cars!"

"And people don't like to be told they are making mistakes. Yes, many things are hereditary ... just as certain foods that are prevalent are introduced into the diet by the mother."

"Perhaps there is a weakness, even from the third generation. It is a tendency, but you don't have to get it," she said.

"The body is giving a warning sign something is wrong. We have to take notice and make changes before the situation becomes so drastic that you are not able to withstand it," Gonet said.

"Drugs create side effects," she said. "It is not a cure to take pills to cure high cholesterol, and remain on a

garbage high cholesterol diet," she said.

"We are facing suppressive treatment, widely spread. How can a deficiency be corrected by taking tablets?" she said.

"I'm not saying we should not use medication," she said, "but antibiotics should be used sparingly so as not to create resistance." All technological advances can be used, she added, but not in all cases.

For example, she said, sailors who got scurvy did not need surgery or antibiotics, they had a deficiency of vitamin C. Likewise, she said of those suffering beriberi in Africa after they began to use white flour that was cleaned of the whole grains, or night blindness due to a deficiency in vitamin A.

"People are used to certain diets, but want results yesterday, and this doesn't happen by nutrition or herbal remedies" she said. "The mistakes of 20 years cannot be cured in one day."

Hypocrates, the father of modern medicine, said "let food be your medicine and the future doctor should interest his patient in a lifestyle and make appropriate adjustments," she added.

"I cannot cure anyone. I facilitate the cure by teaching you what to do, but you must take the responsibility. The balance can be restored, but it takes time, effort and willpower."

Patients must be strong willed, take charge of themselves, face the problem and not make excuses, she said.

