

## **ALCOHOLISM**

Alcoholism is one of the most common forms of addiction. When the drinker chronically indulges in drinking large quantities of alcohol their body also gets used to absorbing large quantities of alcohol so when there is sudden deprivation of alcohol they experience withdrawal symptoms i.e. their body cannot function normally without alcohol.

### **CAUSES**

- 1) Emotional disturbance.
- 2) Poor self esteem.
- 3) Abuse.
- 4) Guilty feeling.
- 5) Stress and an excuse to forget worries.
- 6) Peer pressure.
- 7) Excessive production of histamine predisposes to alcoholism.
- 8) Hereditary factors.
- 9) Metabolic imbalance.
- 10) Hypoglycaemia increases the craving for alcohol.
- 11) Food allergies - sugar, barley, corn, sugar cane, grapes etc.
- 12) May be vitamin and mineral deficiency.

### **INCREASED RISKS FROM CHRONIC DRINKING.**

- 1) Fatty liver
- 2) Cirrhosis of liver
- 3) Severe damage to pancreas, intestines.
- 4) Stroke
- 5) Renal failure
- 6) Heart attack
- 7) Cancer
- 8) Poor blood circulation to the brain.

### **DIETARY MANAGEMENT**

Alcoholism cannot be corrected by any medical treatment or nutritional management. About 50% of alcoholics who enrol in the rehabilitation program relapse back in the first few months of treatment. It needs strong will power and sheer determination to abstain from alcohol. The first and the foremost thing is abstinence from alcohol, and then the dietary management and medical intervention comes into the part.

### **IMPORTANT NOTES FOR DRINKERS**

- 1) Set a daily limit of alcohol and stick to it.
- 2) Control drinking by counting and measuring all the drinks.
- 3) Men should not exceed 2 units of alcohol per day and women should not have more than 1 units. One unit of alcohol is 280 ml beer, 115 ml of wine or a 30 ml of spirits(gin, rum, vodka, or whiskey).
- 4) Always eat something while you drink as it slows the absorption of alcohol.
- 5) Avoid missing meals when you drink.
- 6) Avoid people and environment that encourages drinking.
- 7) Drink slowly and make every second drink a soft drink.
- 8) Never drive after drinking.
- 9) Take proper well balanced diet to avoid weight loss and protein deficiency.
- 10) Consume about 2,000 - 3,000 calories a day.
- 11) About 60% of calories should come from carbohydrates especially from fresh fruits, vegetables and grains.
- 12) Protein should contribute to about 15% of the total calorie intake.
- 13) Remaining 25% should come from fats.

## 14) AVOID

- 15) Avoid alcohol completely. Be determined not to touch alcohol.
- 16) Avoid foods you are allergic to.
- 17) Avoid sugars and wheat from the diet.
- 18) Do not use fenfluramine (a drug to reduce weight) if you are alcoholic.

## CONSUME

- 1) Alcoholics are found to be deficient in many nutrients; hence a proper balanced diet is essential for recovery and to maintain proper health.
- 2) Most alcoholics are found to be deficient in B vitamins (B2 - riboflavin, B1 - thiamine, B6 - pyridoxine, B9 - folate), food rich in B vitamins should be consumed daily; some B vitamins also reduce the craving for alcohol.
- 3) Consume 400 µgm of folic acid daily, as folic acid deficiency is common in alcoholics.
- 4) Consume a minimum of 1.5 mg of vitamin B2 (riboflavin) daily.
- 5) Increase intake of vitamin B1, thiamine up to 50 mg daily, to correct the deficiency and it helps to treat delirium tremens, alleviate the withdrawal symptoms in abstinence of alcohol and prevents further brain damage.
- 6) Consume 2 mg of pyridoxine (vitamin B6); most of alcoholics are deficient in vitamin B6 as it is destroyed by alcohol. Deficiency can only be corrected if alcohol is completely avoided.
- 7) Increase intake of vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid) to 7 mg daily, it protects liver from toxic effects of alcohol.
- 8) Consume 500 mg of vitamin B3 (nicotinic acid) daily, reduces craving for alcohol.
  - a. Consume a minimum of 100 mg of vitamin C daily. Vitamin C deficiency can be seen in about 85 - 90 % of alcoholics.
  - b. Increase intake of zinc to at least 15 - 20 mg daily, most of them show low levels of zinc; zinc also reduces the craving for alcohol and also minimizes the toxic effects of alcohol.
  - c. Alcoholics are usually anaemic, increase intake of iron rich food; iron also helps in alleviating the depression and the withdrawal symptoms.
  - d. Alcoholics are severely deficient in magnesium, consume 400mg of magnesium daily, will correct the deficiency and magnesium also minimizes the withdrawal symptoms after cessation of alcohol.
  - e. If you are suffering from any heart or kidney ailments, talk to your physician before making any changes in your magnesium intake.
  - f. Consume food rich in lithium, not more than 500 µg of lithium should be consumed as it is toxic in high doses. Foods rich in lithium.
    - i. Eggs, processed meat, fish, milk and milk products.
    - ii. Potatoes and vegetables grown in lithium rich soil.
  - g. Adequate protein (55 gm daily) intake should be maintained, as alcoholics have difficulty getting enough protein and calories to maintain proper weight.
  - h. Consume 4,000 - 5,000 IU of vitamin A, but do not exceed the intake as vitamin A is toxic in high doses and can cause further liver damage.
  - i. Alcohol interferes with the action of antioxidants such as vitamin C, vitamin E and selenium.
  - j. On cessation of alcohol these antioxidants are most needed, at least the daily values for these vitamins and minerals. Daily values for vitamin E is 30 IU, for vitamin C is 85 mg and for selenium is 70 µg.
  - k. If you are taking any anticoagulant drugs avoid vitamin E supplements and consult your physician before making any dietary changes.
  - l. Alcoholic are found to be deficient in Gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), it is an essential fatty acid from the omega-6 family. GLA alleviates the withdrawal symptoms, as it is a precursor for the prostaglandin E1. They are found in plant seed oils- evening prime rose, black current, borage, fungal oils, spirulina (blue green algae), etc.
  - m. If you cannot get all the required amount of vitamins and minerals from your diet then you can take multivitamin/ mineral supplement with your physician's advice.

## **CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN**

- a. If you have habit of drinking and want to quit alcohol.
- b. If you have any heart, kidney or liver ailments, before making any dietary changes.
- c. Consult your physician before taking any mineral or vitamin supplements.

**NOTE : PLEASE CONTACT WITH YOUR DOCTOR FOR EXACT DIET FOR THE HEALTH PRBLEMS YOU HAVE.THIS A SAMPLE DIET CHART TO GET THE IDEA OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE FOOD INTAKE TO MAKE YOUR LIFE HEALTHY .**