

Kid soldiers for diabetes war

Govt Plans Course For School Students To Create Awareness On Obesity & Healthy Eating

Durgesh Nandan Jha | TNN

One person dies from diabetes and two more get the disease every 10 seconds in India. The number of diabetics in the country has crossed 60 million and is expected to breach the 100-million mark by 2030, according to the recent Diabetes Atlas released by the International Diabetes Federation.

Given that exercise and diet can go a long way in keeping diabetes at bay, the government is pulling out all stops to increase awareness about the disease — and it is starting with schoolchildren.

Sedentary lifestyles are leading to a rapid rise in the number of obese children. This makes them particularly vulnerable to developing the condition. India accounts for most of the 112,000 children in the region with Type-1 diabetes, according to the Diabetes Atlas. It also reports that a sedentary lifestyle, resulting in obesity, is linked to diabetes in over 80% cases.

The syllabus is being prepared with experts from education and health sectors. The idea is for kids to imbibe the importance of healthy living and exercise

The ministry of health and family welfare and NCERT are now developing a module to be taught from Class VIII that will deal with health topics. It will



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DECODING DIABETES

- Four in five diabetics are in the age group **40-59 yrs**
- In **Type-1 diabetes (T1D)**, insulin-producing cells do not function. Most often diagnosed in children, teens and young adults
- India is home to the largest proportion of **children with Type-1 diabetes**
- In **Type-2 (T2D)**, a person's tissues respond abnormally to insulin. T2D is growing in numbers, with **increasing obesity** and

zero-exercise regimes

- **T2D medication** induces pancreas to secrete more insulin
- Active lifestyle and dietary changes are essential to control **T2D**
- In 2011, India had **62 million** with T2D, compared to **51 million** the previous year
- Almost **5 million deaths** in 2011 were caused by diabetes
- The lifestyle disease can be

controlled with diet and exercise. Neglected, it can lead to heart conditions, damage kidneys, affect eyes and nervous system

- Adults over **45** should be screened for diabetes once every **3 years**
- South-east Asia currently has **71.4 million** people with diabetes. Estimates suggest **36.2 million** diabetics in the region are yet to be diagnosed

cover good health practices, lifestyle management, basic information about diseases and key indicators. "The syllabus is being prepared with experts from

education and health sectors. On completion, we will take this to the CBSE. It will be a compulsory subject and we would want kids to appear for exams," Dr

Jagdish Prasad, director-general of health services told TOI.

The aim, he added, is to nip the problem in the bud. mon, is a progressive disease precipitated by unhealthy food habits and a sedentary lifestyle. Risk factors include obesity, hypertension and family history. "If children are made aware about these, rather than just being instructed to not eat outside and remain active, there are better chances they will follow healthy practices. Children will be the mascots of change as far as dealing with health issues like diabetes is concerned," said Prasad.

Three out of every 10 kids studying in private schools in Delhi are obese, according to a 2011 survey by the Diabetes Foundation of India and National Diabetes, Obesity and Cholesterol Foundation (N-DOC). Government schools fared no better. Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Jaipur also showed similar results.

Dr Anoop Misra of Fortis's department of diabetes and metabolic diseases says 70 to 80% of obese children are likely to remain obese till adulthood and some may develop diabetes in their late 20s or 30s. "If they are made aware about the health consequences of obesity at an early age, chances of preventing the disease improve," he said.

Diabetes is a condition in which the body has trouble turning food into energy. In a healthy person, the hormone insulin helps glucose, the unit that food is broken down into, enter the cells. But in a diabetic, pancreas fails to produce enough insulin, or the body does not use it. Cells starve while glucose builds up in the blood.