



ASK THE DIET EXPERT

Nutritionist Niti Desai, MSc. SRD (UK) solves all your diet dilemmas

Nutritionist **NITI DESAI** answers

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

I am a 27-year-old women with a small body frame. I am around 5 feet and my weight is 50 kg. My problem – a big paunch which I have been trying to reduce for the past 6 to 7 years. Back in college when I was playing basketball and into dancing, I had a 25-inch waist. Now, after a knee injury I have been putting on a lot of weight around my upper & lower waist. The paunch is so big on my small frame that it looks like somebody else's mid section has been attached to my body.

My diet is normal: Breakfast — 3 idlis with sambar & chutney (without coconut). Lunch – Rice or 3 chapatis with *sabji*, or fish twice a week. Dinner – Fruits or 3 *phulkas*. I eat junk but not on a regular basis. I don't understand how I have such a big tummy when I don't eat much and am always on my feet.

Now that I can't work out immediately (due to the injury) how can I reduce my paunch and waist?

Why has only my paunch become so big and impossible to reduce?

Will drinking a lot of water help?

Can eating rice from the office canteen (which has soda) cause a paunch?

Should I consult a slimming clinic? Is it safe?

Please help me. I have even read some articles where fat people have been trained to reduce and become the cover page models of *Health & Nutrition* magazine. Do you think this can be done in my case too?

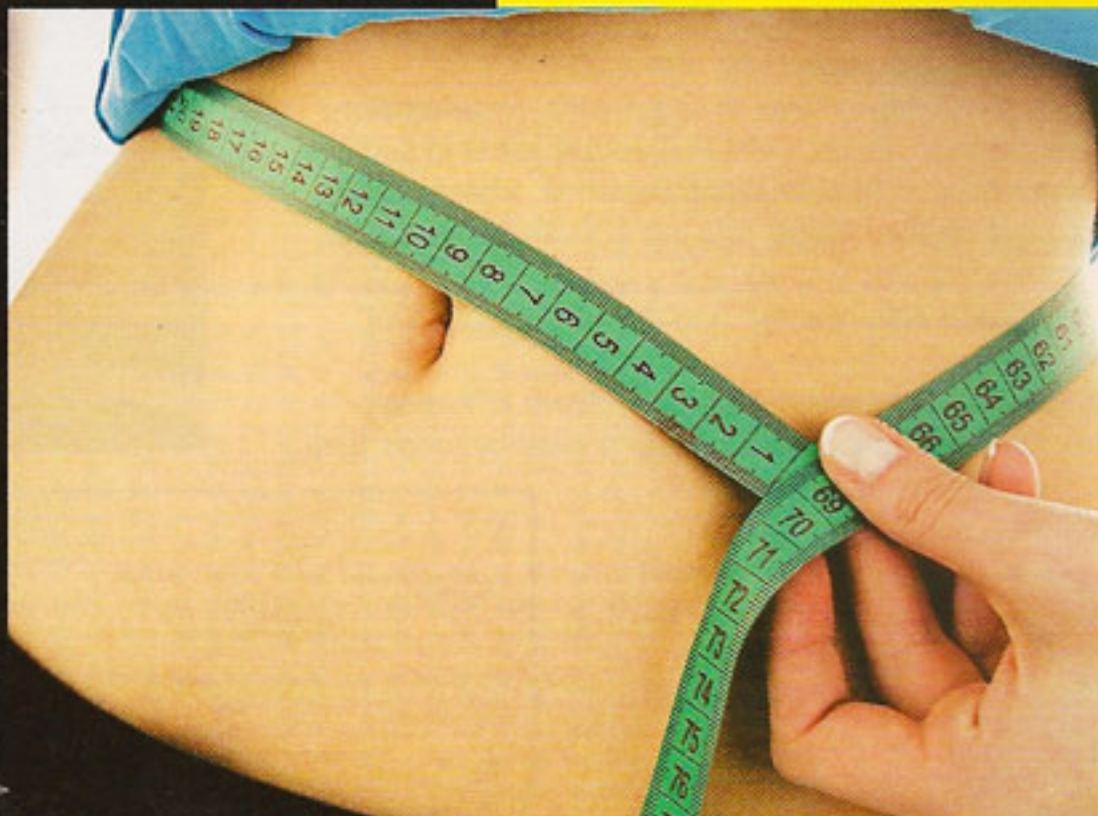
Shilpa

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If you've eliminated stomach enlarging conditions like fibroids, cysts and bloat caused by gas, then your mid-section dilemmas may be attributed to a sudden drop in physical activity levels following the knee injury, esp if you are maintaining the same level of intake.

The following steps should help:

1. Alternate *idlis* with high fibre breakfast options such as wheatflakes / muesli / *dalia* with a cup of skim milk
2. Instead of rice/*chapatis* have *jowar* / *bajri* rotis.
3. Eat every 3 hours. Have small snack between meals, may be *channa-kurmura*, *khakras* or a piece of *chikki*. Nothing fried.
4. Let your dinner be a bowl of boiled *moong* / *channa* / bean salad or grilled / tandoori fish with a bowl of clear soup.
5. Eliminate or cut down on sodium (found in salt, baking soda, MSG, soy sauce which can cause water retention and bloating).
6. Drink 10-12 glasses of water in a day. Water not only eliminates sodium but takes the edge off cravings.



Even with your knee injury some level of physical activity is possible -- e.g. walking, swimming. Ask your doctor or a physiotherapist which activity is best.

With these strategies you will lose weight gradually and can even aspire to be featured in *Health & Nutrition* magazine.



PASS THE SUPPLEMENTS

1. I eat the following dry fruit and seeds dally:
(i) almond (ii) cashew (iii) walnut (iv) dates (v) figs
(vi) prunes (vii) *chaar magaz* (cucumber, water melon,
musk melon, pumpkin seeds) (viii) fenugreek seeds
(powdered) (ix) cinnamon (powdered) (x) Honey

All my educated/rural acquaintances tell me that dry fruit intake during summer is harmful (quoting Ayurveda & Grandma's teachings). Please advise and elucidate!

2. I am also taking dietary supplements namely salmon oil capsules, Milk Thistle, Saw Palmetto, glucosamine with



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Cal-Mag for high BP, sluggish liver, enlarged prostate, knee-pain etc.

3. After my morning walk (4km), Pranayam + Yogasanas (total time 2 hours), I take the abovementioned dry fruit, immediately followed by dietary supplements. The next one hour I engage myself in the kitchen garden, lawn, etc.
4. I request your nutritionist to please guide, advice, correct and help me draw benefits rather than harm, from the above measures. I am sixty eight years, weighing 65 kg for 5'10".

Lt. Col. Ujagar Singh, Jammu

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Your "healthy diet" may need some re-evaluation. Are you eating enough to match your energy expenditure? Are you getting the necessary nutrients? Before you settle for a tonic try the following measures:

1. Have small but frequent meals.
2. A small carb-rich snack -- a banana, a sandwich, *poha/upma*, 2 chapatis, or 1 large boiled potato – 30 minutes before your dance class will provide enough energy to last the session.
3. Make sure you get sufficient protein in your diet – i.e. milk, curd, *paneer*, beans and dals. Eggs, chicken and fish if you are a non-vegetarian.
4. Anemia can also cause fatigue. Get your hemoglobin levels checked. If you're running low on iron, you need to increase your intake of the mineral. Red meat offers the most absorbable kind of heme, but you will also get some iron from leafy greens.
5. On the days when you are not dancing, do some form of cardiovascular exercise -- e.g. brisk walking, jogging, swimming, or a sport — to increase your endurance and stamina.
6. A multivitamin-mineral supplement can provide additional insurance against any shortfall of B vitamins like folic acid and B12, which also contribute to anemia.
7. Don't forget to drink up. Water loss through sweat is a major cause of fatigue esp in summer. If your dance sessions last longer than 30 to 45 mins sip a sports drink, Electral or even lime juice to replace sodium and potassium salts lost through sweat.



RUNNING OUT OF GAS

I am a dancer. My problem is that I have very little stamina. I get tired too soon while dancing. I've never faced any serious illness nor do I have any vices. I follow a healthy diet exercise regularly and perform yoga. Do I need any tonic to boost my energy?

Shashi Kumari Khatri,
Orissa