

DIETICIAN SPEAKS...

Q Hello Dr Niti Desai! Before we get started, could you please brief us on your journey as a Nutritionist and the work you've been doing with celebrities and corporates? How did you take an interest in this field?

A My father was a leading gastroenterologist, so I was naturally inclined towards medical sciences and nutrition seemed an obvious career choice. I studied biochemistry at undergraduate level and nutrition is a continuation of this, as it is primarily applied biochemistry. After having completed my Masters, I went to UK for further studies. I worked there for a couple of years, gaining valuable overseas experience and returned back. Working with different population sets like celebrities of the glamour world, industrialists or Olympics sportsmen involved churning out diverse and customized nutrition solutions which accounted for the different needs of different segment of people, time constraints and working environment. Having worked with Olympic boxers, shooters and international badminton players helped me put my knowledge into practice; which was extremely rewarding.

Q What do people look for in a dietician? How does one pick a good one?

A Unfortunately the profession of nutrition / dietetics is not well regulated in our country. The present government is working on this under the new 'Skill India' initiative and laying down regulations. But anyone looking for a professional dietitian / nutritionist should check their credentials, i.e.. they must have a post graduate degree or should be a RD (registered dietitian). Since there are quacks who have done weekend / three month part time courses or have simply lost weight and are calling themselves professionals. It's better to be safe than sorry!!!

Q Do you have any advice on different training sessions? Such as the different needs one has to cater to, for a session with metabolic



Q demands versus neural (sprints, strength and power workout)?

A Different training sessions have completely different nutritional needs; be it a marathon run, weight lifting, bodybuilding, getting a good physique or achieving targeted weight loss. It should be noted that, even people who take up physical activity for recreation or fitness purpose, do not get optimum results unless they alter their dietary habits – no matter how hard they work out.

Q Can you throw some light on good carbs v/s bad carbs? What should one look for on labels stuck on food supplements, especially protein bars and powders?

A It is a fact that our bodies definitely need carbs but they have earned a bad name. The problem at hand is that our Indian diet is primarily a cereal based diet and it is extremely rich in carbs; not all of which are necessarily good carbs!!! We need to correct this in a big way and definitely introduce more protein in our diet. Our traditional grains such as jowar, bajra, nachni, rajgira (amaranth) are good carbs; whereas polished white rice and maida products such as biscuits, naan, noodle, pasta and white