

# Sanjay's journey to preventing diabetes

## What was the best part of the programme for you?

The best part of this programme was its style of delivering key information in a convincing manner. Diabetes has been a part of my family (my dad is a Type 2 and my brother is a Type 1), so dieting, diabetic medication and insulin pens have been a regular part of our life. Over the years, I have heard of a number of 'quick and easy' remedies for diabetes, but they had very little 'science' behind them. I also found that there was minimal replicability (i.e. some of them would work in some cases, but not in others). Even widely accepted measures such as BMI have their weaknesses, and this course was able to enlighten me that different measures / diet patterns are required for different people.

During this course, it was quite enlightening to find the actual effect of glucose on the human body - how it affected metabolism, sleep, stress, appetite etc. I was able to create a lifestyle which I was comfortable with - and not just simply follow what someone else was doing.

## What was the hardest part of the programme for you?

The hardest part of the programme was when the frequency of classes changed from weekly to monthly. I could feel that after two weeks without classes, my resolve was slipping a bit. I think what I



really missed was the constant feedback from the coach and also the participants. These were excellent morale boosters during my new lifestyle.

## Did you find it easy to make a plan and follow it?

One of my biggest achievements during this course was creating a plan tailored for me, which had the required flexibility so that I had a bit of leeway.

A good example was to create a daily menu so as to keep my daily carb intake below 130g. As an Indian family, we eat cooked meals almost three times a day - these are complex meals and quite difficult to identify the carb content of each ingredient that goes into a meal. You can skip the rice, cut down on the rotis, but you can never do the same with a curry or a stir fry without taking out the main ingredient that makes the dish.

This is when one of the classes introduced the concept of

intermittent fasting and different ways of doing it. I was able to try the 5:2 diet for a few weeks and then 16:8 fasting for another few. I was quite impressed with the 16:8 as most of the fasting happened while I was asleep. I had to skip breakfast to complete my 16 hours, which was difficult during the first week or so. But I am quite used to it now. Considering that most of my breakfast choices were carb heavy (eggs and bacon are an option, but you can only eat so much before you crave for variety!), skipping breakfast has helped me to drastically reduce my carb intake. By having a carb free lunch (meat, veg, cheese, eggs, nuts), I was actually 'carb' fasting for most of the day. So, I wasn't worried much about what I was having for dinner - I would be well within my 130g of carbs a day without thinking too much. I still keep records on a daily basis to see if I am still within limits, but I think I would be fine even without detailed records.

*One of my biggest achievements during this course was creating a plan tailored for me, which had the required flexibility so that I had a bit of leeway.*

# Sanjay's journey to preventing diabetes

## Did you feel supported throughout the whole process?

Yes, I did. The information provided was bite sized and easy to practice. The exercise regime recommended was also very practical (30-minute HIIT exercises) which we were able to test out in the classroom and feedback our progress at the next class. A lifestyle illness is easier to deal with when you have the support of someone in the same boat as you.

## If so, how has the programme made a change to your life?

As I have a history of diabetes in the family, I have always made it a point to have a HbA1c test done every 6 months for the last 4 years. I then got a letter from my GP that I was rapidly approaching the upper limit for my HbA1c result (46) and I was given the option to register for this course, which I promptly did. With the 16:8

fasting, low carb - high fat diet and regular exercise, I was happily surprised to see that my HBA1C count went down to 42 (which was the same reading I had about 4 years ago)!

So, essentially what I managed to achieve was reverse 4 years of damage in merely 6 months!

## Will you continue with the lifestyle changes you have made?

Without question. I am on the look out to make small changes to my lifestyle to add a bit of variety, but I don't think I will stray too far away from the basic principles of intermittent fasting, low carb-high fat dieting and regular exercise.

## What did you think of the group support?

This was another highlight of the course. We had diverse participants in our group (with respect to age, sex, physical abilities, attitudes etc). It was quite refreshing to see

that everyone put their differences aside and focused on how best to deal with diabetes. We discussed mundane things like our shopping habits, sleeping times, eating times etc - but as the days passed, it became very clear how these apparently mundane activities had a profound impact on lifestyle diseases like Type 2 Diabetes.

## Would you recommend the programme to others, and why?

Very strongly. I honestly believe that most people find out they are diabetic once it's too late, making them rely on medication. Routine HBA1c tests should be the norm in this country and anyone at risk should be given free access to this course. Imagine how much money the NHS and other support services can save if you can avoid a large group of the population becoming diabetic in the first place!

