

# 'Use of weight-loss drugs can lead to nutritional deficiency'

**P**EOPLE who are on weight-loss medication should be extremely careful about what they eat, as they will be able to eat only a smaller portion, which can lead to nutritional deficiencies, says **Uma Kalyani**, dietitian at Sri Ramakrishna Charitable Hospital, Thiruvananthapuram, in an interview with **Anna Jose**. Edited excerpts:

**Q People often assume that weight loss and gain are only about food and exercise. What is the significance of a healthy environment in managing weight?**

Stress, poor sleep patterns and several lifestyle factors can also contribute to overeating and weight gain. These factors can lead to hormonal imbalance and other health issues. Bringing discipline to life, managing stress, and being careful about stress eating can help. Consumption of alcohol and smoking can also cause issues leading to weight gain. Controlling such external factors, along with diet and exercise, can significantly reduce weight.

**Q Often, people are distracted while having meals, leading to overconsumption. What is the role of mindful eating?**

Mindful eating plays a crucial role in losing weight. The idea is to eat according to the body's needs rather than emotional cravings or mindless snacking. Mindful eating involves paying attention to hunger and eating in a conscious and balanced manner. Portion control is also very important. Diet plays a major role in weight management, although exercise, sleep, stress levels, and lifestyle habits are also important. However, people believe that if they are working out, they can eat any food and burn it off with exercise. But practically, it's almost impossible. Keeping screens away while having meals, taking smaller portions, and drinking water regularly can help ensure mindful eating (reduce overeating). Emotional eating caused by stress, boredom, or anxiety can also contribute to being overweight and other lifestyle diseases.

**Q Who can use weight loss drugs and does it have any side effects?**

Weight loss drugs can help some people manage obesity and related health conditions. However, taking weight loss medications may lead to loss of appetite. People who are on weight loss medication should be extremely careful about what they eat, as they can only eat a smaller quantity of food. It may also cause nutritional deficiencies or rebound weight gain once they stop medication or if used improperly or without proper dietary guidance from a qualified dietitian. It is recommended to take medications only if the patient is having obesity and has failed to lose weight with dietary modifications and exercises.



**INTERVIEW**  
**UMA KALYANI**