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Surgery removes bitter taste of medicine from life of diabetic

The procedure will help reduce patient's dependence on pills and insulin

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Vrajendra Singh (L) who underwent a diabetes surgery by Dr Raman Goel (R) at Bombay Hospital

For the first time in 10 years, Vrajendra Singh, 52, was able to relish a cup of tea with sugar and savour the famous pedas from his hometown Mathura, thanks to a surgery for diabetes conducted on him at Bombay Hospital.

Singh, a type-II diabetes patient, is the first to undergo a successful surgery for diabetes at Bombay Hospital. The operation, called Ileal Interposition Surgery, was performed at Bombay Hospital, which is the first centre in Asia, to get permission from the Indian Council of Medical Research to conduct this kind of a surgery.

Vrajendra works as an LPG delivery man in Mathura. He is suffering from diabetes for the last 10 years. He was spending over Rs 2000 every month. The disease has taken a toll on his kidneys and eyes and he experiences breathlessness after walking just half a kilometre. Doctors at Bombay Hospital are confident that the surgery, being heralded as a breakthrough in medical field, will help Singh control his sugar without medicines.

Singh underwent surgery on October 4 and had to spend 15 days in hospital. The surgery cost ranges between Rs 2 lakh to Rs 3 lakh, but since Singh was the first patient, he was offered a huge concession.

So far, doctors have tried to control sugar through gastric bypass and sleeve gastrectomy on diabetes patients. But the latest technique is likely to yield better results.

"I was tensed before the surgery, but the doctors encouraged me. My sugar levels got much better within six days of surgery. The doctors say that I need not take a single pill for the next three months. My eyes and kidneys are functioning better. I have recommended this surgery to my brother and sister as well since they suffer from severe diabetes," said Singh.

"There are only four such centres in the world that perform such surgeries. We don't claim this is the ultimate cure for diabetes, but we are hopeful that it will reduce the patient's dependence on pills and insulin after three months. In Singh's case results have been positive," said Dr Raman Goel, metabolic surgeon at Bombay Hospital.

"We are targeting those who have to inject insulin or consume diabetes pills to control their sugar level," added Dr Goel.

More than three crore Indians suffer from diabetes. So far, apart from the obesity surgery, there was no other operation that could help type-II diabetes patients.

How it works ?

The stomach comprises of the duodenum (the C-shaped first part), the jejunum (the coiled mid-section) and the ileum, which is the final section that leads into the large intestine.

In the latest metabolic surgery, doctors perform what is being called the neuro-endocrine brake or the ileal transposition. A part of the ileum is transported to duodenum. What the transported ileum does is to provide stimulus for production of Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1), a hormone that is secreted in response to food. This, in turn, provides the stimulus for insulin secretion. The transposition also helps the beta cells in the pancreas to recover (patients who have undergone the operation record lower insulin secretion than in other diabetic patients, indicating that the pancreas is not overworking itself).

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