

HCG (Myths & Facts): (Excerpts from an Interview with Dr. Deepak V Chaturvedi)

How does the HCG diet work?

- HCG diet works on a hypothesis that, in a situation of calorie deficit HCG primes the hypothalamus to signal the mobilization of body fat stores and hence use the stored fat as primary fuel for energy. In this way it may help in attaining the weight loss in overweight individuals.

This hypothesis was laid by Dr. Simeon few decades back and he performed clinical studies for the same observed very good and significant results.

We need to remember that it is in a hypothetical stage today. In spite of all the good results attained by number of physicians worldwide, FDA has not yet given its clearance for the use of HCG for weight loss.

There is always a question, if one can attain the desired weight loss with a very low calorie diet then what is need of giving HCG?

The answer for this is simple:

It is very difficult to follow a very low calorie diet plan for a period as long as 6-8 weeks without having the adverse effects of starvation as weakness, depression, and hair fall etc. Following the HCG protocol prevents all these symptoms and the weight loss is very physiological, not pathological.

The most important thing to remember here is that: If calories are not restricted as advised then HCG can lead to weight gain and also exogenous HCG can lead to some unwanted effects and hence HCG diet should be followed under strict supervision of a trained doctor/consultant.

Are HCG diet food available in the Indian market?

The HCG diet foods promoted by various companies internationally are nothing more than a mere fad. HCG diet food can be customized for every individual. There is no need to buy the same from any company which is neither palatable nor economical.

Remember, the weight management is a lifelong process and hence the remedies for it should be practical and economical. I never advise my patients to buy the HCG diet foods online. We plan their HCG diets as per their needs considering their beliefs/customs/traditions in mind.

Would you recommend HCG diet to a person wanting to lose weight? If no, why? -- If yes, why? and under what circumstances? (Is it advisable only for morbid obese people for whom there is less option and urgency?)

I prescribe the HCG protocol for my overweight/Obese patients as an adjuvant to the ongoing treatment along with the conventional medical treatment. Not everyone is fit for HCG protocol and vice versa.

Patients having underlying medical issues like Diabetes , Hypertension ,Kidney problems , Hypothyroidism, Anxiety disorders,Fibroids, Malignancy of prostate/Breast/Uterus and other medical issues need more precise judgement about HCG protocol.

Also, people who are frequent travelers need extra attention and care.

I suggest , before starting the HCG protocol for any individual the screening for underlying medical issues should be done. A female should make sure that she is not pregnant.

HCG protocol is not a substitute/alternative for Bariatric surgery for morbidly obese patients, but it can be used to give initial weight loss to the patients looking for Bariatric surgery. Obesity is a complex process, and no single approach can give best results. Hence the multitude of the treatment protocols may be required to give long term treatment of Obesity.

Please remember : HCG protocol is not a treatment for obesity. It should not be used or claimed as a single line treatment for obesity.

What are the side-effects of this diet? What precautions should one take while on this diet?

Like any other treatment, HCG treatment is also not side effect free. To enumerate the few as follows:

- Menstrual irregularities in women.
- Bloating and Breast engorgement.
- Hypotension/ Giddiness may occur, though rare.
- If not followed under supervision then may cause weight gain.

Have you recommended the HCG diet to anyone? If yes, what were the results?

I have included HCG protocol in the Obesity management of number of patients in my clinic. I should say we are among the first to use this protocol for weight management in India. We have trained number of physicians also about HCG protocol in India , Malaysia, Indonesia. As , we have been doing the HCG protocol under close supervision and counseling, I have seen very good results with the addition of this protocol in the conventional weight management protocols. We customize the HCG diet for every patient without hurting the cultural sentiments of our patients. This gives them a confidence and learning about the process. As they learn to get the best HCG diet from their usual food habits the compliance is best and hence results are phenomenal. The constant supervision and follow up with the patients by our doctors multiply the results.