DIETARY MANAGEMENT FOR IRREGULAR PERIODS

The common causes responsible for irregular periods, like Hormonal Imbalance, Low Body Weight, Nutritional Deficiencies, Unhealthy Food Consumption, Obesity, Low Hemoglobin Level (Anemia) have a direct correlation with diet. Other factors Stress, Emotional Trauma can often lead to overeating causing Obesity which another general factor causing irregular periods. Hence, the following dietary guidelines must be followed by women for their overall health and well being:-

- **Well Balanced Diet**: A proper balanced diet rich in all essential nutrients especially, complex carbohydrates, protein, healthy fats, vitamins and minerals is highly recommended. Typically Whole grains, Fresh fruits and Vegetables, Nuts, Lean Meat should be a part of daily diet.

- **Protein**: Inadequate intake of protein can often affect the menstrual cycle. Optimum Protein Intake in the form of Plant Proteins like Soybean, Legumes, Pulses etc. & Animal Protein like Milk, Fish, Egg, Meat etc. should be followed according to recommended dietary guidelines.

- **Omega 3 Fatty Acids**: Omega-3 Fatty Acids play a vital role in hormone production. Regular consumption of Omega 3 Fatty Acid rich food like Flaxseeds, Walnuts, Almonds, Oily Fish like Salmon, Sardine, Cod liver oil helps to balance hormonal levels and regulate menstruation cycle.

- **Dietary Fiber**: Complex Carbohydrates in the form of dietary fiber from foods like Whole Grains like Oats, Brown Rice etc., Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, and Dark Leafy Greens help to normalize irregular periods by maintaining hormonal balance.

- **Iron**: The body is depleted of the vital mineral, Iron during the menstrual cycle. Often heavy periods can lead to anemia. Consumption of Iron Rich Foods like Legumes & Pulses, Dry Fruits like Dates, Raisins, Animal Protein like Fish, Chicken, Egg, Meat etc. is very important make up for the Iron Deficiency, which may otherwise lead to fatigue and weakness.

- **Vitamin C**: Vitamin C regulates the hormone estrogen which is responsible for inducing menstruation. Vitamin C also helps in proper absorption of iron from food which is extremely important during the menstruation cycle. Foods rich in Vitamin C include Citrus Fruits like Orange, Lemon, Sweet Lime, Amla etc., Dark Leafy Greens, Vegetables like Capsicum, Bell Peppers, Broccoli

- **Zinc**: Zinc plays a role to keep the hormone levels, like progesterone, estrogen, and testosterone stable. It also promotes healthy ovulation. Beans, Peanuts, Flax Seeds, Sesame Seeds, Brown Rice, Egg Yolk are rich sources of dietary Zinc.

- **Folic Acid**: During menses, considerable blood loss occurs in women. Often women who have heavy bleeding often become vulnerable towards anemia. Folic Acid helps to produce red blood cells. Hence consumption of folic acid rich foods like Dark Leafy Green Vegetables, Legumes & Pulses like Lentils, Beans etc., Citrus Fruits like Orange, Lemon etc, Nuts like Peanuts, Almonds, Seeds like Flax Seeds, Sunflower Seeds also play a significant role in Anemia Management.

- **Vitamin B12**: Vitamin B12 also plays vital role in red blood cell formation and in keeping the nervous system healthy. Vitamin B12 deficiency leads to severe anemia and other health problems like depression and fatigue that are common symptoms observed during menstruation. Adequate intake of Vitamin B12 rich sources like meat, poultry, fish, eggs and milk is hence recommended during menstruation.

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