

# ‘Our body has the amazing ability to heal itself’

Celebrity nutritionist **Charmaine D’Souza** is out with a new book, *Kitchen Clinic: Good Health Always With Charmaine* published by Random House India, that says good health is at your fingertips



**W**e are bombarded with health advice from every direction nowadays. How does one ascertain what works best for them?

People need to understand that what works very well for one person may not necessarily work as well for them. For instance, Gurmar leaves help to bring down the sugar levels of diabetics. However, if the diabetic patient has a thyroid issue, then the same leaves will increase the blood sugar levels. Our body has this amazing ability to heal itself, if only we can learn to listen to it and give it what it really needs. If some dietary regimen makes you feel healthier, de-stressed and more energetic while also helping with your blood levels, then you should listen to your body and continue doing what you are doing.

**You are an advocate of naturopathy and the natural ways of healing. What are you hoping to achieve with *Kitchen Clinic*?**

*Kitchen Clinic* seeks to educate people about their health condition and their disease. It helps you understand the healing powers of herbs, spices, superfoods and other ingredients. It teaches you how to restore balance through cleansing and purification. There is an entire section devoted to therapeutic waters, spiced oils and spiced vinegars. I have shared therapies to avoid minor ailments as well as control and prevent major illnesses. *Kitchen Clinic* is a comprehensive and holistic approach to herbal healing that can be done from the comfort of your kitchen. I hope my book inspires people to take charge of their health and get back on the road to recovery.

**You’ve been in the field of nutrition for over 20 years. What are the changing trends that you have witnessed in India?**

While some people are still looking for quick fixes, a vast majority has realised that good health is not merely the absence of disease but a complete balance of physical, mental and emotional well-being. People are now taking greater interest in health and are willing to incorporate dietary as well as lifestyle changes into their daily routine in their quest for fitness.



**What are some kitchen ingredients that are packed with goodness?**

Our Indian kitchen shelves are a veritable storehouse of herbal remedies for a host of ailments. Mint, ginger, tulsi, pepper, khuskhus, cloves, cinnamon — the list is endless. Star anise for energy and kesar to stay calm are my favourites.

**Could you tell us a bit about your powder recipes and herbal healing?**

The spice mix I recommend is tailor-made to suit a client’s specific set of ailments and takes into consideration his or her dietary intake, medical supplementation, lifestyle and activity. The fact that the ingredients for the spice mix are often found within the reach of your own kitchen or at the nearest grocery shop adds to the ease in making it in your own home.

**You have made a difference to the lives of many celebrities like Rani Mukerji, Karan Johar, Kirron Kher among others. How has the experience of guiding these stars been?**

Everyone I see is a celebrity — right from the star on the big screen at a multiplex near you, to my liftman who re-

ligiously takes his spice mix to ensure healthy cholesterol levels. I am humbled by the faith people have in me; it overwhelms me.

**The general perception is that eating healthy means having to compromise on taste and appearance. What do you tell people about this?**

Healthy food doesn’t have to be tasteless and lacking eye appeal. Sadly, there are a lot of food manufacturers who say that their product is healthy when it is actually loaded with preservatives and harmful sugar substitutes. I usually ask people to stick to wholesome natural foods which are best for the system.

**How easy is it for people to switch over to healthy habits once you have charted out their plans?**

Once people experience improved immunity levels, are better able to cope with stress and most importantly, are no longer dependent on caffeine/sugar/alcohol or nicotine to feel good, then the compliance is 100 per cent. They stick to the programme because they see results.

— MALLIKA RALE