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## Gateway to Insulin-Free Life



For 52-year old Parameshwari, 20 years of daily injections, sugarless diets and a host of other problems are finally at an end. She now has the distinction of being the first person in South India to have gotten a simultaneous kidney and pancreatic transplant. In fact, if Dr Anand Khakhar is to be believed, she is not a diabetic any more.

Dr Khakhar, who led the team of surgeons at Apollo Hospitals who performed the procedure, said that Parameshwari could now look forward to an insulin free life. “The procedure replaced her pancreas and her kidney. Her kidneys started failing primarily because of her diabetes. We decided that replacing the kidney alone would not help. Thus, the simultaneous transplant,” he said.



According to Dr Prathap Reddy, chairman of Apollo Hospitals, “Indians are genetically more predisposed to developing diabetes than people from the West. A body mass index of 25 is enough for Indians to develop diabetes while a BMI of 31 and above is the general average in the West.”

Pancreatic transplants have not become common in India mainly due to the lack of organ donors, said Dr Khakhar. “An average of 700 pancreas transplants are done in the USA in a year. In India, it is still in its infancy. The cost of the procedure is lower than that of a liver transplant — about `7-8 lakh,” he pointed out.

For Parameshwari, the procedure will help reverse the effects that 20 years of diabetes have had on her, including peripheral neuropathy, said the doctors. “I’ve started eating fruit and foods that I’d trained myself to avoid for the last two decades. And the freedom from those daily doses of insulin feels like heaven. I’ll forever be grateful to the doctors and to the donor of the organs. I want to show people how they can change the lives of others by volunteering for cadaver organ donation,” she declared.