

This mineral is essential for... transportation and storage of oxygen in the blood and muscles. energy production. immune functioning growth. produces haemoglobin and myoglobin.

Sources of iron:  
Red meat, chicken, seafood, eggs and other animal products, dark-green vegetables, avocados, whole grains, nuts, dried fruit, enriched breads and cereals and other plant foods.

## Poison in drinking water



NAIMUL HAQ

Md Abu Mia resting with a neighbour in a village in Babuganj in Barisal while watching the age-old tubewell that has caused havoc for him and his family. All five members of his family are affected by long-term drinking of arsenic contaminated water from the tubewell seen in the picture. The well was recently sealed for drinking purposes by a local NGO and survey shows over 60 per cent of the hand-pumped wells, mostly in the shallow aquifer, in the village is arsenic contaminated by naturally occurring groundwater arsenic. As alternative drinking water option the local NGO in cooperation with NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation has set up a community based rainwater harvesting (RWH) technology which can hold up to 40,000 litres of rain water for use during the off monsoon season. About 20 households would benefit from such initiative also under-construction in other areas of the affected regions with technical support from NGO Forum.

# What is lymphatic filariasis?

Lymphatic filariasis is a parasitic disease caused by microscopic, thread-like worms. The adult worms only live in the human lymph system. The lymph system maintains your body's fluid balance and fights infections.

Lymphatic filariasis affects over 120 million people in 80 countries throughout the tropics and sub-tropics of Asia, Africa, the Western Pacific, and parts of the Caribbean and South America. In Bangladesh the disease is predominantly found in north and northwestern districts.

**How does infection occur?**  
The disease spreads from person to person by mosquito bites. When a mosquito bites you, you can get lymphatic filariasis. The microscopic worms pass from the mosquito through your skin, and travel to your lymph vessels. In your lymph vessels they grow into adults. An adult worm lives for about seven years. The adult worms mate and release millions of microscopic worms into your blood. Once you have the worms in your blood when a mosquito bites you, you can give the infection to others

through mosquitoes.

**Who is at risk for infection?**

You need many mosquito bites over several months to years to get lymphatic filariasis. People living or staying for a long time in tropical or sub-tropical areas where the disease is common are at the greatest risk for infection.

**What are the symptoms of lymphatic filariasis?**

At first, most people don't know they have lymphatic filariasis. They usually don't feel any symptoms until after the adult worms die. The disease usually is not life threatening, but it can permanently damage your lymph system and kidneys. Because your lymph system does not work right, fluid collects and causes swelling in the arms, breasts legs, and, for men, the genital area. The name for this swelling is lymphedema (limf-ah-DE-ma). The entire leg, arm, or genital area may swell to several times its normal size. Also, the swelling and the decreased function of the lymph system make it difficult for your body to fight germs and infections. You will have more bacterial infections in your skin and lymph system. This causes hardening and thickening of the skin, which is called elephantiasis (el-ah-fan-TIE-ah-sis).

**What is the impact of this**

**disease?**

Lymphatic filariasis is a leading cause of permanent and long-term disability worldwide. People with the disease can suffer pain, disfigurement, and sexual disability. Communities frequently shun women and men disfigured by the disease. Many women with visible signs of the disease will never marry, or their spouses and families will reject them. Affected people frequently are unable to work because of their disability. This hurts their families and their communities. Poor sanitation and rapid population growth in tropical and subtropical areas of the world, where the disease is common, has created more places for mosquitoes to breed and has led to more people becoming infected.

**How can I prevent infection?**

Prevention includes giving entire communities medicine that kills the microscopic worms and controlling mosquitoes. Avoiding mosquito bites is another form of prevention. The mosquitoes that carry the microscopic worms usually bite between the hours of dusk and dawn. If you live in an area with lymphatic filariasis:  
 1. Sleep under a mosquito net.  
 2. Use mosquito repellent on your exposed skin between dusk and dawn.

3. Take a yearly dose of medicine that kills the worms circulating in the blood. The medicine will kill all of the microscopic worms in the blood and some of the adult worms. It does not kill all of them.

**What is the treatment for lymphatic filariasis?**

If you have adult worms, you should take a yearly dose of medicine that kills the microscopic worms circulating in your blood. While this does not kill the adult worms, it does prevent you from giving the disease to someone else. Even after the adult worms die, you can have swelling of your arms, legs, breasts, or genitals. You can keep the swelling from getting worse.  
 1. Carefully wash the swollen area with soap and water every day.  
 2. Use anti-bacterial cream on any wounds. This stops bacterial infections and keeps the swelling from worsening.  
 3. Elevate and exercise the swollen arm or leg to move the fluid and improve the lymph flow.

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lymphaticfilariasis/factsht\\_lymphatic\\_filar.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lymphaticfilariasis/factsht_lymphatic_filar.htm)

## Fact sheet on tuberculosis (TB)

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease that is spread from person to person through the air. TB usually affects the lungs, but it can also affect other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys, or the spine. TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs or sneezes. When a person inhales air that contains TB germs, he or she may become infected. People with TB infection do not feel sick and do not have any symptoms. However, they may develop TB disease at some time in the future.

The general symptoms of TB disease include feeling sick or weak, weight loss, fever, and night sweats. The symptoms of TB of the lungs include coughing, chest pain, and coughing up blood. Other symptoms depend on the part of the body that is affected.

In Bangladesh one person, according to officials, is infected with the airborne disease every two minutes while one person dies from the disease every ten minutes.

**How is TB spread?**

TB is spread from person to person through the air. When people with TB disease of the lungs or throat cough or sneeze, they can put TB germs into the air. Then other people who breathe in the air containing these germs can become infected.

People with TB disease are most likely to spread it to people they spend time with every day, such as family members or coworkers. If you think you have been around someone who has TB disease, you should go to your doctor or the local health department for tests. It is important to remember that people who have TB infection but not TB disease cannot spread the germs to others.

**What is a tuberculin skin test?**

The tuberculin skin test is used

for finding out whether a person is infected with the TB germs. It does not tell whether a person has TB disease. For the skin test, a small amount of fluid called tuberculin is injected under the skin in the lower part of the arm. Two or three days later, a health care worker looks for a reaction on the arm.

**What does a positive reaction mean?**

A positive reaction to the tuberculin skin test usually means that the person has been infected with the TB germ. It does not necessarily mean that the person has TB disease. Other tests, such as a chest x-ray and a sample of phlegm, are needed to see whether the person has TB disease. People who have a positive reaction to the skin test but who do not have TB disease cannot spread the germs to others. They may be given a drug to treat the infection and prevent them from developing TB disease. People who have TB disease must take several drugs to cure the disease.

**Skin testing for persons who have been vaccinated with BCG**

BCG, or bacille Calmette-Guérin, is a vaccine for TB disease. BCG is used in many countries. BCG vaccination does not completely prevent people from getting TB. People who have been vaccinated with BCG can be given a tuberculin skin test.

**Treatment for TB disease**

TB disease can be cured by taking several drugs for six to 12 months. It is very important that people who have TB disease take the drugs exactly as prescribed. If they stop taking the drugs too soon or if they do not take the drugs correctly, the germs that are still alive may become resistant to those drugs. TB that is resistant to drugs is harder to treat.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/pubs/tbfactsheets/250010.htm>

## Diet pills can be extremely dangerous!

Diet pills can (and usually do, given enough time and dosage) cause the following symptoms, and diseases: Stomach and/or intestinal ulcers, high blood pressure, heart, liver, and thyroid disease, diabetes, anemia, nervousness, anxiety, depression, seizure disorder, stroke, difficulty in urination, sleeplessness, tremors, dizziness, headache, heart palpita-

tions or tingling sensations, heart attacks, long term heart problems, nervousness, mood swings, bad temperament.

The only weight you really lose is water, because they also cause water loss, or dehydration, which falsely appears to be fat loss.

<http://www.bodyweightloss.com/>

## Know about kidney diseases

Kidney disease is the inability of the kidneys to perform their normal functions.

**What to look for**

- 1. frequent thirst and urge to urinate.
- 2. the passing of very small amounts of urine.
- 3. swelling of the hands and feet, and puffiness around the eyes.
- 4. unpleasant taste in the mouth and urine like odour to the breath.
- 5. persistent fatigue or shortness of breath.
- 6. loss of appetite.
- 7. increasingly higher blood pressure.
- 8. pale skin.
- 9. excessively dry, persistently itchy skin.
- 10. in children: increased fatigue and sleepiness; decrease in appetite; and eventually, poor growth.

The kidneys perform a vital function for the human body. They cleanse the blood, maintain the correct balance of various body chemicals, and help regulate blood pressure.

When the kidneys become diseased or damaged, they can suddenly or gradually lose their ability to perform these vital functions. Waste products and excess fluid then build up inside the body, causing a variety of symptoms. It is essential that kidneys in this state be treated.

**Causes**

The causes of chronic kidney disease (the slow, gradual impairment of the organs) are usually the result of another disease such as diabetes, high blood pressure or lumps may also trigger kidney disease by causing the kidneys to become inflamed.

Some chronic kidney diseases are inherited. Others are congenital meaning something the person was born with that makes the victim susceptible to kidney diseases.

If you habitually take medications or drugs (including illegal drugs) you may also contract this disease. Researchers also suspect that excessive amounts of vitamin D and protein may harm the kidneys. But in many chronic cases, the precise cause remains unknown.

Acute kidney disease (kidney disease that develops suddenly) can occur immediately following the onset of any medical condition that suddenly and dramatically reduces the flow of blood to the kidneys. Examples are a heart attack, a traumatic injury, a serious infection, or a toxic reaction to a drug.

Inhaling or swallowing certain toxins, including methyl, or wood, alcohol; carbon tetrachloride;

antifreeze; and poisonous mushrooms, can also cause the kidneys to suddenly malfunction.

**Traditional treatment**

It is imperative that you seek conventional medical advice with kidney complaints, as they can be fatal. Alternative therapies should only be used as supplement to your traditional treatment.

Medications can sometimes help slow the progress of chronic kidney disease also certain diets may halt the disease. But if these measures fail, and the kidneys may worsen to the point where they are totally dysfunctional. There are then only two treatments: dialysis, in which artificial devices clean the blood of waste products, or a kidney transplant.

If you are diagnosed with one of the more serious forms of kidney disease, your doctor may prescribe several medications.

Your doctor may also prescribe an iron and calcium supplement if those levels have fallen in your blood.

Always consult your doctor before taking any over-the-counter medications as these can have a worsening effect on your kidneys.

Restrictive diets which avoid protein can often have very positive effects on the kidneys however, this approach is still very controversial in medical circles.

**Alternative/natural treatments**

Kidney disease is a serious disease therefore you should bear in mind that alternative therapies are only a supplement to your traditional treatment. You should also talk over with your doctor before starting any other supplements or medication as these can have a profound affect on your kidneys.

**Chinese Herbs** - Traditional Chinese health practitioners use several herbs in the treatment of kidney disorders. However, because many herbs can be harmful to the kidneys, you should always consult your physician before taking the advice of a herbalist or ingesting any herbal

remedies.

**Homeopathy** - Homeopathic remedies are generally safe for the treatment of chronic kidney conditions.

**Dietary considerations**

A special restricted diet can decrease the workload on diseased kidneys, keep body fluids and chemicals in balance, and avoid a build up of waste products in the body. These diets are individualised for each patient but they are usually centred on the reduction of protein, potassium, phosphorus and sodium. It is very important to drink lots of filtered water. Food which should be avoided are cocoa, tea, rhubarb, beets, parsley.

Calcium supplements are frequently recommended in order to counteract the bone weakening that frequently accompanies kidney disease.

**Chemicals that can damage the kidneys**

Several of the chemicals found in common household products have been linked to both acute and chronic kidney diseases. By becoming aware and reading the labels on all products in the home you can also avoid exposure to these.

**Cadmium** - (used in production of) pesticides, rubber tyres, plastics, paints, and other products. Because of its industrial uses, it is now widely found in water and food supplies.

**Chloroform** - This chemical can be found in drinking water as a by-product of chlorination and found in the air as the result of automobile and industrial pollution. Chloroform is also still used as an ingredient in some cough syrups, toothpaste, glues, pesticides, and other consumer products. To avoid this chemical can be found in drinking water as a by-product of chlorination and found in the air as the result of automobile and industrial pollution.

[http://www.internetpharmacyservices.com/healthcontentpharm/ailmentsanddiseases/kidney\\_disease.htm](http://www.internetpharmacyservices.com/healthcontentpharm/ailmentsanddiseases/kidney_disease.htm)

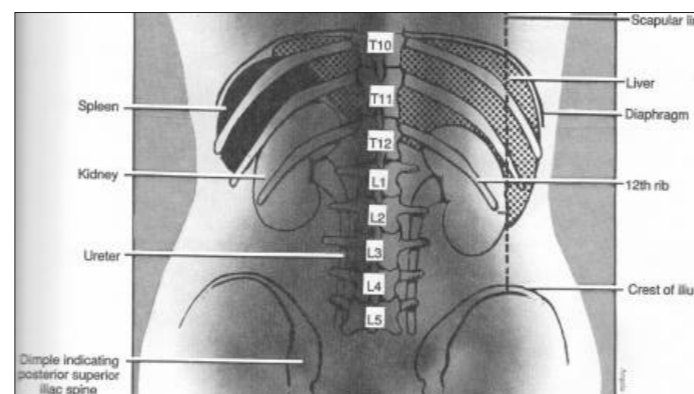


diagram showing kidney position

## Quit smoking!

Kicking the smoking habit can be very hard but it is not impossible and it is the best thing you can do for your health - ever!

Smokers live shorter lives than non-smokers do and in addition, smoking is a risk factor for heart and cancer problems. The good news is that these risks reduce after quitting. So it is never too late to start on the road to health.

**Why people don't quit**

**1. Possible weight gain...**

Although putting on unnecessary weight is not favourable for your health either, the risks from the extra weight gain far less than the risks of smoking. It is reported that the average weight gained is only 2.4kg (remember this is the average) and of course, exercise and a healthy diet easily control weight gain.

**2. Nicotine cravings and withdrawal symptoms are too much to bear...**

There is no getting around this one, many people may experience nicotine withdrawal symptoms after they quit smoking. This is a problem that most quitters will have to face, but be rest assured, this is a temporary symptom.

**3. Smoking is many people's way of handling stress...**

Please remember that there are other more beneficial ways to cope with stress and to relax.

**Effects of smoking**

**If you smoke, there is an increased risk of:-**

1. **Heart disease**

2. **Respiratory diseases such as asthma and emphysema**

3. **High blood pressure**

4. **Cancers - Many different types**

5. **Health risks if you are taking the 'pill'**

6. **Wrinkles and skin problems**

7. **Infertility**

8. **Osteoporosis**

9. **Slower healing**

10. **Lower fitness levels**

11. **Health risks if you are pregnant:-**

1. Miscarriage and ectopic pregnancies

2. Your child could be 'still born'

3. Premature birth

4. Sudden infant death syndrome (cot death)

5. Low birth weight

6. Complications can increase

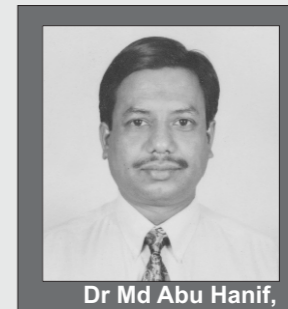
7. Retarded growth

8. Childhood asthma

9. Other respiratory problems during childhood.

<http://www.internetpharmacyservices.com/healthcontentpharm/specialfeatures/stopsmoking.htm>

## Ask the doctor



Dr Md Abu Hanif,

What to do when you have tonsil infection, sinus problem?

Dr Md Abu Hanif, assistant professor of Dhaka medical College Hospital talks about common problems of tonsillitis and sinusitis and advises on traditional treatment and care.

**Definition:** Inflammation of tonsil is known as tonsillitis. It may be acute tonsillitis or chronic tonsillitis.

**Acute tonsillitis:** Acute inflammation of tonsil. It is mainly a disease of childhood but also frequently seen in adults. It may be in epidemic form specially in schools and colleges.

**Causes:** Bacteria and virus.

Poor oral hygiene, poor nourishment and congested surroundings are important predisposing factors for this disease.

**Symptoms and signs:** The patient presents with discomfort in the throat (sorethroat), difficulty in swallowing and generalised bodyache symptoms like malaise, anorexia, fever and bodyache on examination (when doctor examines the patients) patient is febrile, pulse rate is high. The tonsils appear swollen, congested with white spots (exudate) in the crypts. There may be oedema of soft palate and uvula.

**Treatment:** Bed rest, plenty of fluids, and liquid diet. Analgesic like paracetamol to relieve pain and fever. Antibiotics are used according to culture sensitivity report of oral swab. However penicillin is the drug of choice, erythromycin, ampicillin, amoxicillin may be needed for resistant cases.

**Complications of acute tonsillitis (if not treated properly)**

a) chronic tonsillitis

b) Peritonsillar abscess

c) Parapharyngeal abscess

d) Acute otitis media infection

e) Acute epiglottitis

f) Acute sinusitis

g) Acute tonsillitis

h) Acute tonsillitis

i) Acute tonsillitis

j) Acute tonsillitis

k) Acute tonsillitis

l) Acute tonsillitis

m) Acute tonsillitis

There is recurrent attacks and the commonest cause of recurrent infection of tonsil is a persistent or recurrent infection of nose and the peripheral areas.

**Common age of infection: 4-15 years.**

**Symptoms and signs:** Discomfort in the throat, recurrent attacks of sore-throat, unpleasant taste, bad smell in the mouth, often the patient find it difficult in swallowing and change in voice.

**Treatment:** Treatment of sinus and nasal infection. Antibiotics, antihistamine and analgesics. If the above measures fail surgical removal of tonsils (Tonsillectomy) might be needed.

**Sinusitis**

Paranasal sinuses are cavities in the face and skull bones, containing air. These are two maxillary sinuses, two frontal sinuses, three groups of ethmoidal sinuses and two sphenoidal sinuses.

The mucosal inflammations of paranasal sinuses is known as sinusitis.

**Acute Sinusitis:** The main causes are common cold or influenza, dental infection, tooth extraction, trauma or through a blood born infection: swimming and diving may be cause.

**Symptoms and signs:** Malaise, bodyache, fever and shivering pain in the cheek, below the eyes and over forehead. Pain is more on stooping or coughing.

Nasal obstruction and mucopurulent discharge from nose.

**On Examination:** Redness and Oedema of soft tissue of face.

**Investigation:** X-ray paranasal sinuses are helpful. The sinuses appear lazy and may show a fluid level.

**Treatment:** Bed rest. Antibiotics like ampicillin, amoxicillin, nasal decongestant, steam inhalation and analgesic. If the symptoms do not disappear with this measure, then drainage of the sinuses is needed.

**Chronic Sinusitis:** Chronic inflammation of the sinuses is a common condition. It is the result of incompletely resolved acute sinusitis.

**Symptom and signs:** Nasal obstruction, nasal discharge, abnormalities of smell and headache.

**Treatment:** Antibiotics, Analgesic, Antihistamine, nasal drops are given, metronedazol is also helpful. Antral washout done.