starhealth@thedailystar.net HEALTH

Tips for a happy and healthy Eid

Once again, Eid is coming to greets us. Returning to pre-Ramadan food habits may trigger undesirable side effects such as indigestion, heart burn and the dreaded weight gain.

An average person gains just over one pound during the holiday season, according to a 2000 study by researchers at the U.S. National Institutes of Health. While this number may seem insignificant in the short term, small weight gains will add up year after year.

With a little know-how and vigilance, you can get as much enjoyment out of the approaching holidays without feeling guilty or unhealthy. To prevent overeating during the holidays, do not skip meals and arrive at an event on an empty stomach. This means eating meals at regular times throughout the day, and having a light snack between meals in order to keep blood sugar levels consistent. Here are a few tips for a happy and healthy Eid:

a)Start your own family traditions by planning get-togethers around activities, instead of meals. While a meal is quickly forgotten, a fun event will be remembered for years to come.

b)Make sure to eat something before your Fajr prayer.

c)Low fat diet is recommended after

d) A moderately light breakfast can follow.

e)Try eating your main meals during Eid at timings that are close to Ramadan's Iftar and Suhour. This will help your body to gradually get used to normal eating habits.

f)Limit portion sizes to decrease the chances of having indigestion and heart-

g)Modify sweet recipes by decreasing their fat content and substituting sugar with honey or dates as this offers a higher nutritional value to the dish and adds a richer taste.

With these useful tips, you can now enjoy an Eid that's nutritious and healthy, while ensuring that you gently go back to your regular 3 meals and incorporating regular exercise in your life.

The article is compiled by Dr Abu Sayeed Shimul, Dhaka Medical College Hospital.



Australian court approves tobacco pack logo ban

Australia's highest court has recently upheld a new government law on mandatory packaging for cigarettes that removes brand colours and logos from packaging. The World Health Organisation (WHO) strongly welcomes the landmark decision that will help reduce the number of smokers in the country and calls on the rest of the world to follow Australia's tough stance on tobacco marketing.

The law requires cigarettes to be sold in olive green packets, with graphic images warning of the consequences of smoking.

With Australia's victory, public health enters a brave new world of tobacco control. The evidence on the positive health impact of plain packaging compiled by Australia's High Court will benefit other countries in their efforts to develop and implement strong tobacco control measures to protect the health of their people and to stand resolute against the advances of the tobacco industry.

Source: World Health Organisation



Ramadan fasting not linked to preterm births

In a small new study published in in BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, pregnant women who fasted during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan were no more likely to give birth prematurely than women who did not observe the fast.

Lebanese researchers found no significant differences in the rate of births before the 37th week of pregnancy among 201 pregnant Beirut women who fasted during the daytime compared with 201 women who did not.

Walnuts improve sperm health

Eating around two handfuls of walnuts a day improves sperm health in young men, a study in the journal Biology of Reproduction suggests. Sperm shape, swimming ability and vitality improved in men who added walnuts to their diet over 12 weeks. It helps sub-fertile men, with poor semen quality to have a better chance of conceiving.

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Surprising ways to boost your brainpower

The brain is our number one use-it-or-lose-it organ. Take a look at the following tips to boost your brain power and improve cognition, regardless of your age.

Exercise

A team from the University of Illinois' Beckman Institute recently reviewed dozens of past studies and found that aerobic exercise boosts not only speed and sharpness of thought but also the volume of brain tissue. As little as 50 minutes of brisk walking 3 times a week was found to have this brainexpanding effect.

Brush and floss

Studies have found that dental and gum infections were associated with worse cognitive function throughout adult life — not just in later years. To improve memory, floss daily and brush your teeth for 2 minutes at least once a day.

Eat blueberries

New research shows that the purple-hued fruits may help sharpen your thought processes.

The researchers theorise that anthocyanin — the dark blue pigment found in blueberries - is

responsible for these cognitive changes; it contains chemicals that may cross the blood-brain barrier and lodge in regions that govern learning and memory.

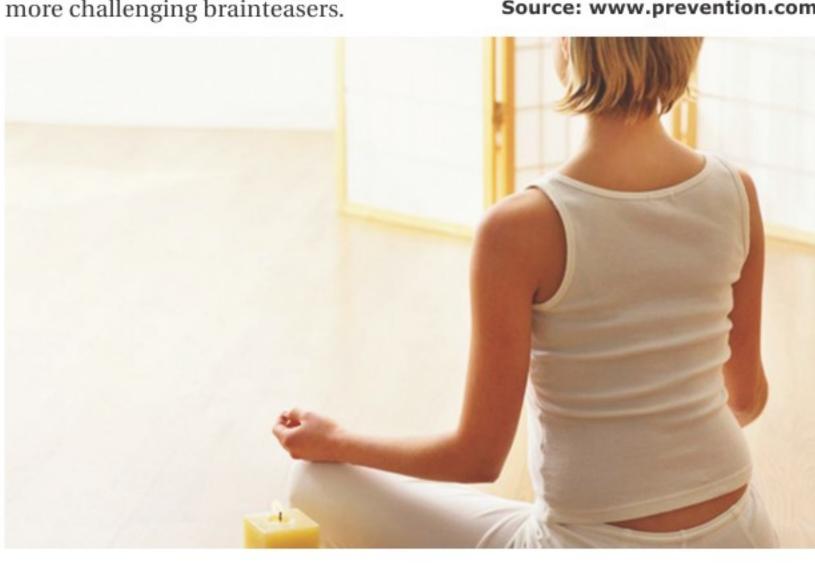
Do puzzles

Doing puzzle is a brain-boosting exercise that sharpened mental abilities so much that their brains performed like those of people more than 10 years younger. Whip out a booklet of basic puzzles when you are riding to work on the train or waiting in a long checkout line. As your skills improve, graduate to more challenging brainteasers.

Meditate

More than just a great stress reliever, meditation can also enhance your brain's gray matter. Make the practice a regular habit the participants in a recent study meditated an average of 40 minutes a day. But you can start with 15 on your lunch break or before you leave for work. Sit upright, close your eyes, and focus on whatever you are experiencing in the present moment, whether it is birds chirping in the distance or just the sound of your own breathing.

Source: www.prevention.com



DID YOU KNOW?



The possible signs of an ear infection

Ear infections are common in babies and young toddlers, who may not always be able to verbalise that something is wrong. The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders says symptoms of an ear infection may include:

- •Pulling or tugging at the ear.
- Crying frequently or acting very fussy.
- ·Having trouble sleeping.
- •Running a fever, which is common in young children and infants.
- •Having fluid draining from the ear.
- ·Seeming clumsy or having trouble balancing.
- •Having difficulty hearing or failing to respond to soft sounds.



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