

# For formalin free foods

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Food adulteration with formalin is a major cause for concern now a days. Formalin is a colorless chemical substance commonly used to preserve food for long time. Widespread use of formalin in Bangladesh poses a public health threat and has devastating effects on human body in the long run.

Formalin is of a mixture traditionally used in textiles, plastics, papers, paint, construction industry and well known to preserve human corpse. When it is mixed with food in excess amount, the chemical is converted into more rigid substance called formaldehyde that gives the lasting rigidity of the food for long term preservation. Besides, formaldehyde is capable of killing microbes or germs which are usually responsible for the process of decay of food.

#### Understanding formalin inside or not?

Best option for detection of formalin is to test with formalin kits. However, some general features described below may tell



you whether the food is adulterated with formalin or not.

- The fish will be stiff, have rubbery meat, hard scales, red gills, clear eyes, does not have the fishy smell and no flies will be flying around.

- Fruits get light yellowish color, the skin tends to be elastic, with a drug-like odor or ash-like odor when boiled or mixed with hot water.

**Health hazards of formalin**

Formalin is a dangerous and toxic material for human health. If it goes into our bodies along with food in high amount, the chemical will react with almost all substances in the cells so that death of cells occur and our body get

poisoned.

Besides, formalin in the body also cause stomach irritation, allergy, vomiting, bloody diarrhoea, urine mixed with blood, carcinogenic effect (causing cancer), changes in cell function, may damage kidneys and even may cause death by causing circulatory failure.

#### Tips to reduction of formalin in food

The level of formalin in food can be reduced but not fully removed. There are easy and inexpensive ways that cheap very cheap and easy to do that. Such as:

- Soaking of fish in two kinds of solvents — water and salt. Soaking in water for 60 minutes is able to lower the rate to 61.25 percent formalin and soaking in salt water is able to reduce formalin to 89.53 percent.

- Another way is to soak fish in vinegar for 15 minutes.

- Soaking of fruits in hot water for 30 minutes. It could eliminate formalin up to 70 percent.

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## HEALTH bulletin

### Walking, biking to work seems to have mental health benefits

Trading the gas pedal for foot power or bike power to get to your job can also improve your mental health, according to a new study published in Journal Preventive Medicine.

Daily commuters who stopped driving to work and started walking or riding a bike were under less stress and were able to concentrate better, the study showed.

The authors noted that using public transportation also resulted in an improvement in commuters' psychological well-being.

### Social networking sites can help obese lose weight

Social networking sites can help people lose weight, according to a new study published in the recent issue of Health Affairs.

For people who are obese, sites like Twitter and Facebook can be an inexpensive and convenient source of support from doctors as well as peers, researchers found.



## Tackling drug resistant TB in Bangladesh

ZAHID AL AMIN

Tuberculosis (TB) caused by the infectious agent called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* is generally respond well to anti-TB drugs. In some persons, these first line drugs are not effective as the causative organism becomes resistant to these. This condition is known as Multidrug-resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB).

Globally, an estimated 450,000 people developed MDR-TB and at least 170,000 deaths were caused by the disease in 2012. Bangladesh ranks 10th among 27 high MDR TB burden countries. The emergence of MDR-TB has become a major threat for TB control in Bangladesh.

A general TB patient gets cured completely if he/she takes drugs takes for six month regularly. If the patient does not take drugs regularly, or does not complete full course or if the drugs are below quality, then TB germs become drug-resistance. This is called MDR-TB and it generally not cured with existing drugs. The patients have to take new drugs for about 22 to 24 months.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO) estimate, there are 10,000 MDR-TB patients in Bangladesh. Ironically, many of these MDR-TB patients stay out of the treatment facilities for various reasons. Most of them cannot afford to stay in the hospital for long 2 years. These people pose a great risk of contracting the MDR-TB germ to other people rising the burden further.

A WHO report said MDR-TB puts the global TB control programme in trouble. It appeared as a public



health problem in a number of countries in the world.

Twenty nine percent of old patients turned into MDR-TB patients in Bangladesh. The scope of treatment for MDR-TB patients is limited compared to its number in the country.

The most important thing a person can do to prevent the spread of MDR TB is to take all of their medications exactly as prescribed by their health care provider. No doses should be missed and treatment should not be stopped early.

Healthcare providers can help prevent MDR TB by quickly diagnosing cases, following recommended treatment guidelines, monitoring patients' response to

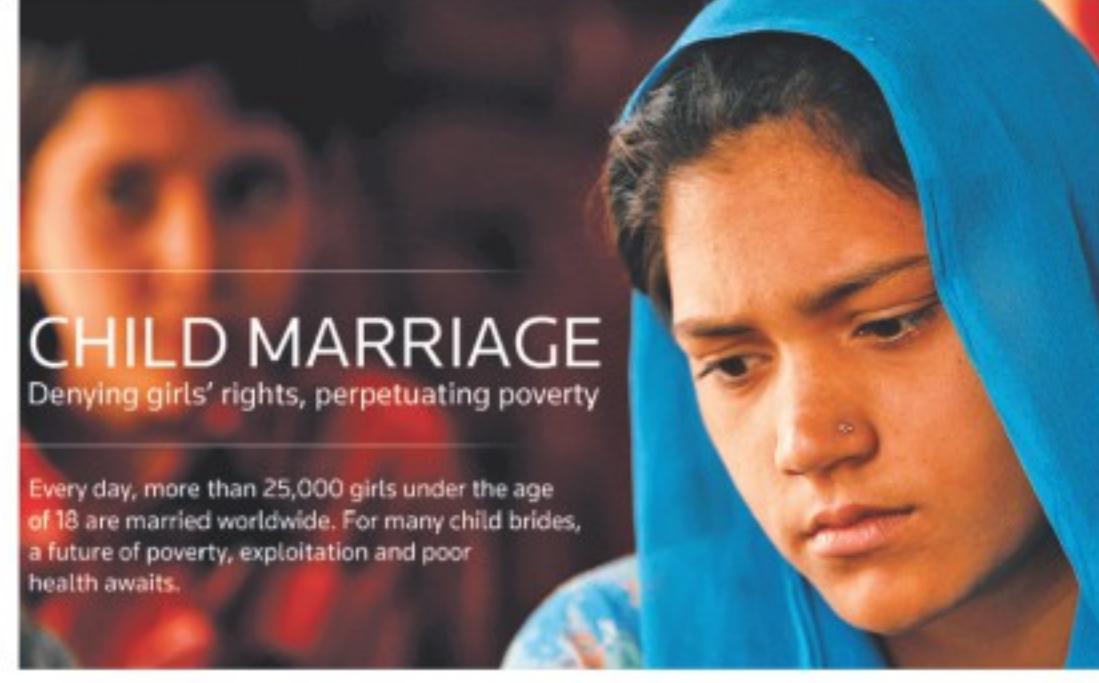
treatment, and making sure therapy is completed.

Another way to prevent getting MDR TB is to avoid exposure to known MDR TB patients in closed or crowded places such as hospitals, prisons, or homeless shelters.

The challenge of containing MDR-TB is huge. We need to ensure adequate human resource to manage MDR-TB patients, establishing well functioning Drug Resistance TB Team at the community, increasing bed capacity, ensuring daily DOT treatment, implementing Infection control measures, tracking TB patients, expansion and decentralisation of MDR-TB treatment centers.

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## CHILD MARRIAGE



### UNGA holds first-ever child marriage panel

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Recently in New-York the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) held its first-ever panel discussion on child marriage. The panel, requested by last year's first General Assembly resolution on child marriage, focused on the post-2015 development agenda and the development costs of child marriage.

Child marriage is a global problem, but it is particularly widespread in African and Indo-Pacific countries. In Bangladesh, the percentage of women married before they turn 18 is 65%, followed by 47% in India and 40% in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Worldwide, girls who live in rural areas are twice as likely to be married by 18 as those living in urban areas.

The UNGA panel aimed to address these issues, by highlighting the human rights and development impacts of child, early and forced marriages, with particular emphasis on the post-2015 agenda. Furthermore, the panel address the initiatives for ending child marriage, and the challenges to be overcome collectively to ensure positive lastly impact.

For thousands of girls, child marriage is a significant barrier to education for many of the 75 million girls worldwide who do not go to school. Child marriage also increases the likelihood of physical and mental abuse by family members, as well as coercion into sexual relationships where early pregnancy puts their health at risk.

Child marriage is not included in the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that expire in 2015, and organisations like World YWCA, Girls Not Brides, Plan International and activists around the world are lobbying and advocating for child marriage to be included in the Sustainable Development Goals -post 2015 agenda. Engaging in such UN panel discussions raises the issue on to the global platform and encourages UN member states to join the cause.

## Seminar on recent developments in Cardiology

With a view to sharing updated knowledge on cardiology, American College of Cardiology (ACC), National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) in cooperation with Sun Pharma have organised a seminar in a local hotel in the city, says a press release.

Experts from ACC and Bangladesh discussed the latest guideline of management of heart diseases including hypertension, heart failure, high cholesterol management and rhythm abnormalities and shared breakthrough clinical findings in the field of cardiology.



**f b /StarHealthBD**

## Knowing for better living

**Physical activity**, at any age, protects against a multitude of chronic health problems including many forms of **Cardiovascular Disease**

Exercise regularly

Maintain a healthy diet

Control your body weight

Avoid smoking

Control your diabetes

Consult your Doctor