

Maintaining your health after Ramadan

STAR HEALTH DESK

Every year the Holy month of Ramadan provides us with the opportunity to eliminate unhealthy eating pattern and gives our overburdened digestive systems a much needed break. However, now that the blessed month of Ramadan is almost over and the Eid-ul-Fitr festivities are on our way soon. Here are few tips for maintaining the incredible health benefits and habits that you worked so hard to gain in Ramadan.

1. Fast twice a week
Try fasting two days a week after Ramadan. Scientific research has shown that intermittent fasting is beneficial for the body and mind. Studies have shown that periods of intermittent fasting speed up the process by which the wastes left by dead and damaged cells are removed from the body. Fasting has also been shown to result in physical and mental benefits, such as improved memory, sleep, concentration and increased energy.

2. Have 2-3 meals a day
Make a habit of eating 2-3 regular meals a day (similar to Ramadan), rather than 6 small ones. The sensation of hunger between meals, contrary to popular belief, can be of great



benefit to our physical health. According to a study, the sensation of hunger may actually protect against Alzheimer's disease.

3. The 80/20 rule
Practice the 80/20 rule and eat only until you are 80% full. A good way to do this is to eat slowly, so you are aware of your satiation level while you eat.

4. Take probiotics to maintain digestive health
The excessive consumption of sweets that followed the long days of fasting in Ramadan and

that are a big part of Eid celebrations, might take its toll on your digestive system. Try adding a probiotic supplement to your daily regimen to replenish the levels of good bacterial flora in your intestines. Studies have shown that probiotics can also help keep colds and infection at bay as well as improve women's health and metabolism.

5. Be a good role model
Remember that you are a role model for others in your life. Therefore Ramadan was a great opportunity to model great behavior for young children. It also allowed them to witness the fruits of delayed gratification after a long day of fasting. If you are a parent, remember that your eating habits and behavior will shape your child's attitude towards food for the rest of their life. Be a good role model and demonstrate a healthy approach towards making food choices.

6. Abstain from smoking and make exercise a priority
For smokers intending to quit, Ramadan was an ideal time to gradually stop smoking and eventually curb the harmful habit altogether. Once Ramadan is over, if you are a smoker do not give in to the temptation of having a cigarette after meals. Continue to replace toxic habit with healthier ones such as exercise. Stays motivated with positive self-talk and make exercise a priority by sticking to your workout schedule.

Finally, always remember that great health maximises productivity in all areas of your life. Make your health a priority, treat it as a blessing and you will begin to see amazing benefits.

HAVE A NICE DAY

Black diamond - 1



Black foods have been around us forever; but recently scientists have rediscovered particular important ingredients inside these black foods.

What are those black foods? Well, these are black berries, black pepper, black rice, black beans, black sesame seeds, black grapes, black mushrooms, black olives, black tea etc. But, on the top lies 'black seed oil' or popularly known as 'kalo-jira oil' in Bangladesh. Once upon a time black rice was the food of the Emperor of China and forbidden to the common people.

Black berries are among the top ten oxidant rich foods. Its polyphenol antioxidants regulate metabolism and keeps one trim. Today scientists have found a lot of extraordinary qualities inside our Bangladeshi summer fruit 'kalo (black) jam' including its seed inside – found helpful to prevent diabetes.

Think about cinnamon which is also more or less black in colour – good for diabetic patients but not more than 1000 mg everyday. Many Chinese begin their day with a tonic made from ground black sesame seeds mixed with hot water.

Black pepper is another of the world's 50 healthiest foods. In fact, today pepper is probably the most widely used spice in the world. Japanese scientists state that black foods are not only high in oxidants, but can prevent cancer. Even it is said that black dark chocolate (but remembers, with at least 75-90% cocoa content), which tastes so good can be so good for your health.

Let's go black and keep our health perfect.

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HEALTHbulletin



Smoking may play schizophrenia role

Smoking could play a direct role in the development of schizophrenia and needs to be investigated, according to a study published in The Lancet.

The team at King's College London say smokers are more likely to develop the disorder and at a younger age.

Smoking has long been associated with psychosis, but it has often been believed that schizophrenia patients are more likely to smoke because they use cigarettes as a form of self-medication to ease the distress of hearing voices or having hallucinations.

The researchers said nicotine altered levels of the brain chemical dopamine, which has already been implicated in the psychosis.

Financing new global health goal

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is urging countries to move towards universal health coverage and to scale up international investment in catalytic development funding. The call comes as world leaders travel to the 3rd UN Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa to discuss ways to pay for the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), to be launched in New York in September 2015.

"The best way to assure meaningful progress towards the new global health goal is for countries to move closer to universal health coverage," says Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General.

Progress towards the MDGs
By the end of this year, if current trends continue, the world will meet Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets for turning around the epidemics of HIV, malaria and tuberculosis and increasing access to safe drinking water. It will also have made substantial progress in reducing child under-nutrition, maternal and child deaths, and increasing access to basic sanitation.

But wide gaps remain between and within countries. Much still needs to be done - particularly in the poorest countries and countries affected by conflict. And new health challenges have emerged, as highlighted by the Ebola crisis in West Africa and the rise of noncommunicable diseases. Within this context, countries have agreed a new global health goal with a strong focus on equity - to ensure healthy

A recent WHO and World Bank Group report, Tracking universal health coverage: First global monitoring report, shows that 400 million people do not have access to essential health services and 6% of people in developing countries are tipped into or pushed further into extreme poverty because of health spending.

lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Moving towards universal health coverage
Universal health coverage, a major focus of WHO's work for the past 5 years, aims to redress those imbalances. As a first step, the Organisation recommends reducing the need for people to pay directly for services at the point of delivery – out of their own pockets. In countries that depend heavily on out-of-pocket payments, health bills

push 100 million people into poverty each year.

Public funding is key to reducing out of pocket expenditure. As public spending on health goes up, dependence on out-of-pocket payments declines. Between 1995 to 2013, government spending on health increased from 3.4 to 4.1% of GDP - on average across 190 countries. The increase in low-income countries has been greater, from 1.7 to 2.6% of GDP.

Despite this improvement, there is a long way to go. The challenge for countries is twofold: to mobilise more domestic public resources for health, and to ensure health systems use resources more efficiently.

At the Addis Ababa conference, WHO will urge the international community to strengthen cooperation with low- and lower-middle income countries to combine domestic and external funding so they provide sufficient resources to build robust health systems.

The Organisation will also emphasise the importance of getting better results from the money spent by putting in place innovative service delivery arrangements, lowering prices of key inputs (e.g. medicines) procured internationally, and reducing fragmentation in aid flows to countries.

"If the world is serious about the health-related SDG targets, it needs to make serious investments – both at domestic and international levels," adds Dr Chan.

Source: World Health Organisation



National scale up of newborn cord care


The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh hosted the Launching Ceremony of National Scale Up of 7.1% Chlorhexidine application for newborn cord care in Dhaka, Bangladesh recently.

In 2013, Bangladesh declared its commitment for Ending Preventable Child Deaths by 2035 and incorporated four priority interventions to prevent neonatal death. Application of 7.1% Chlorhexidine for newborn umbilical cord care is one of the priority interventions for newborn survival. Trials conducted in Bangladesh and other countries have shown that an estimated 23 percent neonatal deaths can be averted with cord care using Chlorhexidine.

The ministry has now decided to scale up this intervention across the country. The national scale up is guided by the National Technical Working Committee for Newborn Health and is supported by several development partners. USAID, through its flagship MaMoni Health Systems Strengthening project, is providing financial and technical assistance for this initiative. The Saving Newborn Lives project of Save the Children is also providing technical assistance to the ministry to facilitate the national scale up of this intervention.



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Take sehri in time

Avoid salty & fried foods in sehri

Take usual amount of meal in sehri

Drink at least half a liter of water in sehri

Consult your doctor

"Take meal a little before dawn, for there is a blessing in taking meal at that time."

Al-Hadith (Muslim, 2412)