

# Foods that boost your immune system

STAR HEALTH DESK

We are often very much interested to supplementary vitamins to boost our immune system. But the natural sources are always the best way to do that. Following are some food that may do this.

**Elderberry:** It is an old folk remedy. This fruit is loaded with nutrients called antioxidants, and it may help fight inflammation. In some lab studies, an extract from the berries appears to block flu viruses.

**Button mushrooms:** They give you the mineral selenium and the B vitamins riboflavin and niacin. If you are low on selenium, you may be more likely to get a more severe flu. Riboflavin and niacin play a role in a healthy immune system.

**Oysters:** They have got zinc in them, which appears to have some virus-fighting powers. That is probably because zinc helps create and activate white blood cells involved in the immune response. It also assists your immune system with tasks such as healing wounds.

**Watermelon:** When it is ripe, it has also got plenty of an antioxidant called glutathione. It strengthens the immune system so it can fight infection. To get the most glutathione in your



watermelon, eat the red pulpy flesh near the rind.

**Wheat germ:** It is the part of a wheat seed that feeds a baby wheat plant, and it is rich in nutrients. It is a great way to get zinc, antioxidants, and B vitamins. Wheat germ delivers a good mix of fiber, protein, and some healthy fat.

**Low-fat yogurt:** Probiotics, found in yogurt and other fermented products, may ease the severity of colds. Look for added vitamin D. Studies show that

people with low vitamin D levels may be more likely to get colds or the flu.

**Spinach:** You will find lots of nutrients in this "super food." One of them is folate, which helps your body make new cells and repair DNA. It also boosts fiber, antioxidants such as vitamin C, and more. Eat spinach raw or lightly cooked to get the most benefit.

**Tea:** Feel free to choose white, green, or black. Each delivers disease-fighting polyphenols and

flavonoids. These antioxidants seek out cell-damaging free radicals and destroy them.

**Sweet potato:** Like carrots, sweet potatoes have beta-carotene. In your body that turns into vitamin A, which mops up damaging free radicals. This helps bolster the immune system and may even improve the aging process.

**Broccoli:** It is easy to find at the grocery store, and it is an immune-boosting basic. You will get plenty of nutrients that protect your body from damage. It

has vitamins A and C, and the antioxidant glutathione.

**Garlic:** This kitchen staple does more than punch up the flavour of food. Raw garlic can help beat skin infections thanks to its ability to fight bacteria, viruses, and fungi. To get the benefits, you have to use the real stuff, though, not garlic powder. A garlic supplement may even help lower your cholesterol.

**Chicken soup:** There is hard science behind Grandma's favourite cold remedy. Homemade chicken soup really can ease your symptoms and may help you get well sooner. There is a chemical in it called carnosine that can protect your body from the flu virus.

**Pomegranate juice:** The ancient Egyptians were on to something when they used this colorful fruit to treat infections. So far, most modern research has focused on pomegranate extract, but the juice shows promise: It may help your body fight bacteria and several kinds of viruses, including the flu.

**Ginger:** This knobby root is a good source of antioxidants. Add ginger to stir fries or steep it in hot water to make tea. Antioxidants work best in your body when you get them straight from fruits and veggies.

## ENVIRONMENT

DEATHS BY AIR POLLUTION

# 37,449

IN BANGLADESH YEARLY (2012)

## Breathing life back into our cities

Air pollution is not just a little haze in the distance. Air pollution outdoors and inside our homes claims an estimated 6.5 million lives every year. It impacts our health through long-term exposure and causes near-term climate change, threatening the lives of future generations.

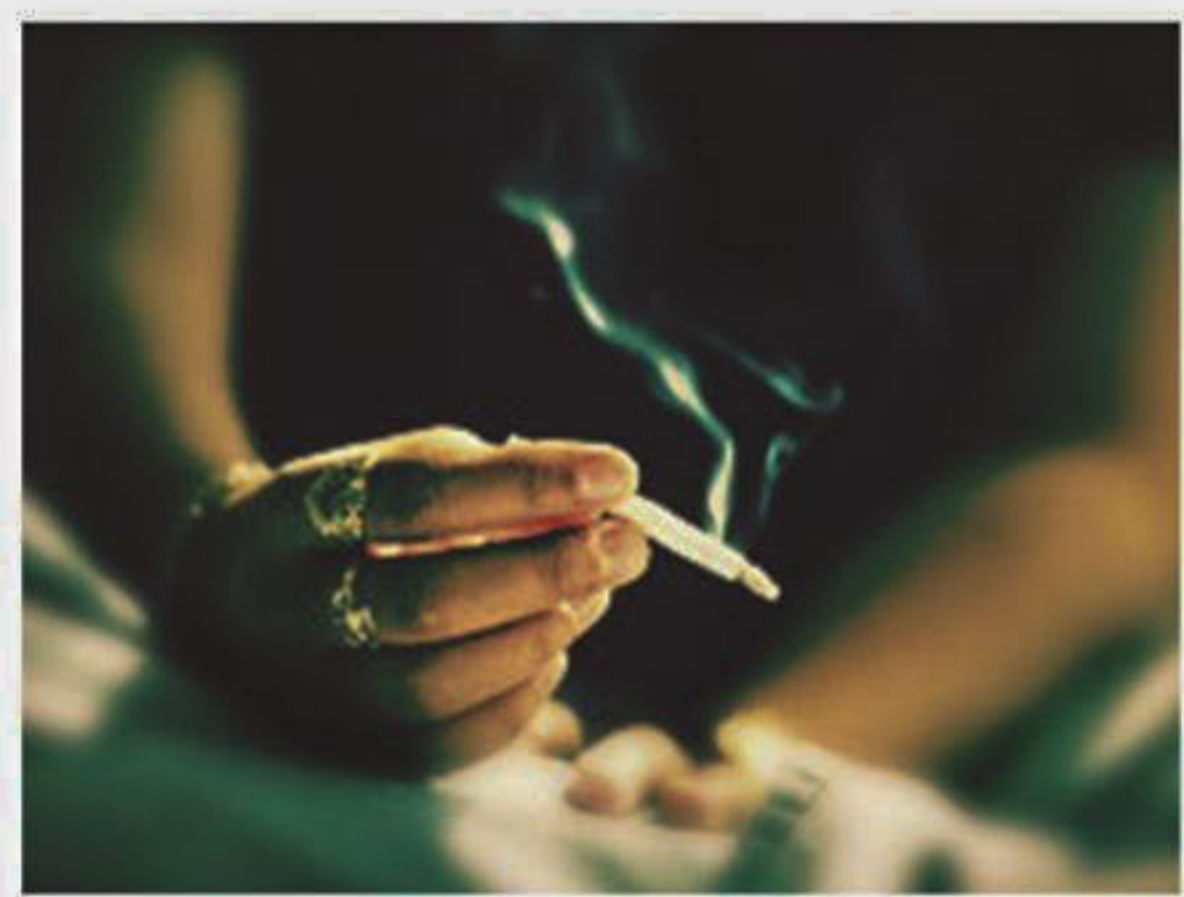
The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Climate & Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) have launched a joint campaign called *Breathe Life* to mobilise cities and individuals to protect our health and planet from the effects of air pollution.

Visit [www.BreatheLife2030.org](http://www.BreatheLife2030.org) to see how the air in your city compares to the WHO guideline for safe air, learn about clean air solutions and commit to breathe life back into your city.



## HEALTH bulletin

# Abuse of prescription drugs



## High strength cannabis linked to becoming dependent

New data presented at this year's International Early Psychosis Association (IEPA) meeting in Milan, Italy (20-22 October) adds to accumulating evidence that high-potency cannabis is associated with an increased risk of users becoming dependent on cannabis. The analysis is by Dr Tom Freeman at University College London, UK.

Estimates suggest around 182 million people worldwide use cannabis each year, a number that could rise as legalisation of recreational use and/or medical use increases. Roughly 9% of people who try cannabis will become dependent on it at some point in their lifetime. People who are dependent on cannabis are often unable to cut down or quit, despite experiencing persistent negative effects from the drug.

Some people are more vulnerable to the harmful effects of cannabis than others.

Drug abuse and addiction is a social problem and affects people from all walks of life and all socio-economic statuses. Abuse of most drugs will produce noticeable physical or behavioural signs and symptoms, most likely both. Prescription drug abuse means taking medication intentionally without a prescription.

Many people use prescription drugs for non-medical reasons, especially young people are strongly represented in this group. Mood changing drugs are highly abused by this group. Depressants, opioids and morphine derivatives, stimulants and antidepressants are most common groups of drugs that are highly abused. These drugs can lead to a variety of adverse effects on body, mind and can eventually kill due to overdose.

There are many reasons why do people abuse prescription drugs.

- They think prescription drugs are less dangerous drugs because they are prescribed by a doctor. This is obviously a wrong perception.
- Getting prescription drugs are easier than getting illegal drugs.
- Teenagers do not understand the risks of prescription drugs.

### Prevention plan:

**Patient:** Patients must ensure for their own benefit that they use prescription medications appropriately. They should always follow the prescribed directions and aware of potential interactions with other drugs. If any patient wants to change a dosing regimen or stop

taking medications, s/he should discuss with the physicians. In addition, unused or expired medications should be properly discarded.

**Physicians:** Physicians are in a unique position to identify abuse of prescription drugs. Screening of prescription drug abuse can be incorporated into routine medical visits as well as notify the rapid increases in the amount of medication needed or frequent, unscheduled refill requests.

**Pharmacists:** Pharmacists dispense medications and they can serve as the first line of defense in recognising prescription drug abuse. Each pharmacy in the region can contact to each other

through a hotline to alert themselves.

Dispensing pharmacists should ensure that drugs are refilled successfully and current prescription would not be again refilled from any pharmacy without legal permission of doctors. It would be easy to detect the person who is refilling prescriptions from multiple sources.

It is true that abuse of prescription drugs can be riskier than the abuse of illegally manufactured drugs.

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## Breast cancer awareness programme at DMP

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) organised a breast cancer awareness programme for its female members at the Rajarbag Police Line. The event was supported by Centre for Cancer Prevention and Research (CCPR) and Bangladesh Breast Cancer Awareness Forum, says a press release.

Dr. Md. Habibullah Talukder Ruskin, Associate Professor and Head of Cancer Epidemiology, National Institute of Cancer Research Hospital and also the Chief Coordinator of Breast Cancer Awareness Forum presented the keynote paper.

Dr. Talukder in his keynote speech stressed on monthly self examination of both breasts by all women, check up by a doctor if any suspicious lump or node felt, investigations like mammogram, ultrasonogram or Fine Needle Aspiration Cytology (FNAC) as prescribed by the doctor.

He also said, "There is no need to rush after a specialist doctor after feeling any doubtful mass, rather it is necessary to consult with the nearest hospital or doctor at the locality and follow his/her advice." He described the risk factors, signs and symptoms as well as treatment options of breast cancer.

Dr. Talukder expressed his gratitude to DMP for arranging the programme. We should educate women from all sections and professions to help create a social movement to reduce premature mortality from breast cancer. Female police members took part in the question & answer session.



# WORLD AIDS DAY

01 December' 2016

## GETTING TO ZERO

### 10 facts on HIV/AIDS

1. HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infects cells of the immune system.
2. HIV can be transmitted in several ways.

HIV can be transmitted through:

- Unprotected sexual intercourse (vaginal or anal) or oral sex with an infected person
- Transfusions of contaminated blood
- The sharing of contaminated needles, syringes or other sharp instruments
- The transmission between a mother and her baby during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding

### 3. There are several ways to prevent HIV transmission.

Key ways to prevent HIV transmission:

- Practice safe sexual behaviours such as using condoms;
- Get tested and treated for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV;
- Avoid injecting drugs, or if you do, always use new and disposable needles and syringes;
- Ensure that any blood or blood products that you might need are tested for HIV.

4. 36.7 million people are living with HIV worldwide.
5. Combination antiretroviral therapy (ART) prevents the HIV virus from multiplying in the body.
6. As of end 2015, 17.0 million people were receiving ART worldwide.
7. HIV testing can help to ensure treatment for people in need.
8. An estimated 1.8 million children are living with HIV.
9. Elimination of mother-to-child-transmission is becoming a reality.
10. HIV is the strongest risk factor for developing active TB disease.

