

Pay attention to your oral health during Ramadan fasting

Ramadan is a holy month of fasting. The prolonged fasting hours from ‘Suhoor’ to ‘Iftar’ demand special care, and the most neglected amongst all is oral health. During Ramadan, Muslims seek to become closer to Allah, ask for forgiveness and gather with families to celebrate the most important time in Islamic culture. Since Muslims are not allowed to eat, drink, and do other things throughout daylight, it is difficult to maintain their dental health during Ramadan.

DR ADILY ADIB KHAN

The lack of food and water for exponentially more extended periods affects your health and metabolism. Fasting is a long period that may last up to fourteen hours and perhaps more than that. This leads to a lack of salivation due to the body using its water in many other body processes resulting in dryness in the mouth and increasing the chance of bacteria and viruses attacking the teeth and gums. This can cause diseases of the teeth and gums and an undesirable mouth smell. In addition, saliva production and the foods we eat strongly affect our breath. So bad breath, called Halitosis, can quickly become an issue. Other changes in daily routine and disturbance



of sleep times during the fasting period may also lead to insufficient attention to oral hygiene, which can harm the teeth’ health. Some tips on oral health care to stop bad breath during Ramadan are needed.

- Floss – Flossing should be done first after Iftar and Suhoor to remove any food particles stuck between the teeth.
- Brush – Ensure that you brush your teeth for two minutes at least twice during non-fasting hours to ensure good oral hygiene. Make sure you vigorously brush your tongue as well.
- Mouthwash – Use an alcohol-free mouthwash and swish it in your mouth for 30 seconds.
- Stop smoking – Try to refrain from smoking during non-fasting hours.
- Stay hydrated – During non-fasting

hours, it is very important to drink water and stay hydrated.

- Use miswak – According to the General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments, miswak is permissible to clean teeth. Miswak is a twig from an arak tree used for cleaning teeth. It helps stimulate saliva to prevent dryness in your throat and eliminates bad breath in your mouth.

Just like rinsing your mouth, you can provide some dental care as long as you don’t swallow anything. During your regular checkup and cleaning, you can let your dentist know you are fasting, and they can take additional care to ensure nothing is swallowed. However, if you are not comfortable with this risk, you may want to reschedule your appointment.

If you face an emergency, such as an infected tooth, you are allowed to break the fast for the case. However, the best way to avoid this is by keeping regular checkups before fasting. This will prevent serious issues. Ramadan Kareem, may you all have a blessed month.

Ramadan Mubarak, may you all have a blessed month.

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High cardiovascular risk is associated with symptoms of depression

A new study published in PLOS ONE links cardiovascular risk factors to an increased risk of depression in older adults. Similar risk factors, such as inflammation and oxidative stress, are thought to link cardiovascular disease and depression. However, depression has been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease. The new study focused on overweight or obese men and women aged 55-75.

At the start of the study, 6,545 healthy people were included. Compared to low risk (LR) women, high risk (HR) women were more likely to be depressed. Medium risk (MR) and HR also had higher odds of depression than LR among participants with total cholesterol below 160 mg/mL. MR and HR had a lower risk of depression than LR among participants with total cholesterol of 280 mg/mL or higher. MR and HR participants with high baseline cholesterol showed the greatest decreases in depressive status after two years of following a Mediterranean diet.

Depressive symptoms, especially in women, are associated with high and very high cardiovascular risk. The role of other factors, such as adherence to the Mediterranean Diet, requires further investigation. High cardiovascular risk, especially in women, is associated with symptoms of depression in the elderly.



Vaccines provide extra protection for those with immunity from a previous COVID-19 infection

In a study, researchers aimed to determine whether the four COVID-19 vaccines licenced for use in Brazil – CoronaVac, Oxford-AstraZeneca (ChAdOx1), Janssen (Ad26.COV2.S) and Pfizer-BioNTech (BNT162b2) – offered additional protection against symptomatic infection, hospitalisation and death, to those reinfected with SARS-CoV-2.

COVID-19 vaccinations are highly effective in preventing symptomatic infection and hospitalisation in individuals who have never been infected, but their efficacy in those infected remains unclear. Knowing how long people are immune after a COVID-19 vaccination is critical as the pandemic continues and additional transmissible variants emerge.

Vaccine efficacy against symptomatic reinfection was 39% for CoronaVac, 56% for Oxford-AstraZeneca, 44% for Janssen, and 66% for Pfizer-BioNTech. It was 90% for Oxford-AstraZeneca, 80% for Janssen, and 80% for Pfizer-BioNTech. In the first 28 days after a positive test, 1,545 individuals were hospitalised, and 290 died.

The extent of protection after COVID-19 infection varies across people. All four of these vaccines have proven to provide extra protection for those with previous COVID-19 infection, reducing hospitalisation and death.

Guard yourself this summer against these common health problems

DR ZUBAIR KHALED HUQ

It is that time of year when one has more concerns than just sweating out the summer heat. So, prepare yourself this summer to avoid some of these annoying health issues. Here are some of the most common summer illnesses to avoid and some helpful tips:

Heat stroke: Heat stroke is a severe form of hyperthermia caused by the body absorbing too much heat. Heat stroke is a common summer event that can raise the body temperature to 40°C. Nausea, vomiting, and headaches are common with fever. These are all symptoms of a heat stroke. Wear light-weight, loose-fitting clothing to allow for air circulation. Everyone needs to drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.

Dehydration: It occurs when the fluid loss exceeds intake. Dehydration is the most common summer illness because we unknowingly lose a lot of water through sweating or urination. The main symptom of dehydration is extreme thirst. The best way to treat dehydration is to drink lots of water. Adults should drink 2L of water daily. Coconut water, for example, can help prevent dehydration.

Sunburn: Sunburns are caused by overexposure to the sun’s ultraviolet rays. Sunburns are identified by severely reddened, swollen skin and pain. Severe sunburns cause fever, chills, nausea, and vomiting. Commercially available sunscreens or sunblocks can be used to

body from harmful UV rays. Apply 15-30 minutes before sun exposure to avoid sunburn.

Prickly heat rash: Prickly heat is an itchy, painful rash caused by excessive sweating and sweat gland blockage. Prickly heat rashes are common in people who sweat and in children with underdeveloped sweat glands. Heat rashes can exhaust the body’s heat regulation system. Avoid hot, humid environments and strenuous physical activities. Shower frequently, use talcum powder to keep skin dry and wear cotton clothing.

Infections: The summer heat can cause viral infections, food and waterborne diseases, chicken pox, and influenza, foot fungus, especially near the toenails. The best way to avoid summer infections is to avoid extreme heat, stay hydrated, wash hands

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frequently, and maintain good hygiene.

Skin issues: Summer’s scorching heat causes dry skin, tanning, acne, rashes, and redness. Sunlight damages the skin, causing breakdown and premature ageing. Heat and sweat can exacerbate these issues. Keep your skin moisturised and hydrated with plenty of water to avoid summer skin issues.

Food poisoning: Summer activities include eating roadside food and drinking contaminated water. Usually prepared in unhygienic conditions. Always bring a water bottle. If you eat or drink outside, ensure the vendor is clean throughout the food preparation and serving process.

It only takes a little care. Beware of your symptoms related to these summer problems and treat accordingly.

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Are healthy plant-based diets associated with a lower risk of developing diabetes?



New research published in Diabetologia finds that the consumption of healthy plant-based foods, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, coffee, and legumes, is associated with a lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes (T2D) in generally healthy people and support their role in diabetes prevention.

The study conducted an analysis of blood plasma samples and dietary intake of 10,684 participants. The study found that compared with participants who did not develop T2D, those who were diagnosed with the disease during follow-up had a lower intake of healthy plant-based foods, as well as lower scores for Plant-based Diet Index (PDI) and healthy Plant-based Diet Index (hPDI). In addition, they had a higher average body mass index (BMI), and were more likely to have high blood pressure and cholesterol levels, use blood pressure and cholesterol drugs, have a family history of diabetes, and be less physically active.

The metabolomics data revealed that plant-based diets had distinct multi-metabolite profiles, which varied between healthy and unhealthy plant-based diets. An overall plant-based diet and healthy plant-based diet metabolite profile scores were inversely associated with incident T2D in a generally healthy population, while unhealthy plant-based diet metabolite profile scores were not. As a result, higher PDI and hPDI metabolite profile scores indicated better adherence to those diets and a lower risk of T2D.

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