

Uganda introduced life-saving yellow fever vaccine into routine immunisation programme

In 2022, Uganda was one of 14 countries in Africa reporting confirmed cases of yellow fever. With the support of the Eliminate Yellow fever Epidemics (EYE) Strategy and its key partners, including the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, a multi-country outbreak response was organised in neighbouring countries that faced more serious yellow fever transmission.

During the Integrated Child Health Days (IChD) activities in October 2022, despite the ongoing Ebola Virus Disease outbreak having been declared the month before, Uganda maintained its plans to introduce the yellow fever vaccine into its routine immunisation programme.

It is being administered to children aged 9 months, as part of its commitment to the EYE Strategy, with a vaccine introduction grant (VIG) from Gavi. All children will be vaccinated with both yellow fever and measles-rubella vaccines.

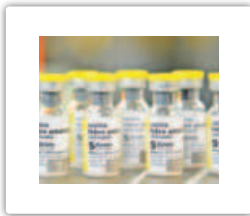
The EYE Strategy is a multi-stakeholder partnership that provides support to high-risk countries on how to minimise and eventually end the threat of yellow fever epidemics.

Yellow fever is transmitted by the Aedes Aegypti or Haemagogus mosquito species and outbreaks in Uganda originate mainly from sylvatic, or jungle, transmission. Mosquitoes acquire the virus by feeding on infected primates and then bite humans during agricultural and other activities in forested areas. Humans can then carry the virus to other areas, including urban centres, where it is spread by mosquitoes from human to human.

Yellow fever infections can cause serious illness and, in up to 30-60% of severe cases, death. There are no specific therapeutics to treat the disease, but early supportive care increases survival rates. Crucially, there is a vaccine against yellow fever, and it is safe, highly effective, and only a single dose is needed for life-long protection.

In addition to the success of the roll-out of yellow fever vaccine into its routine immunisation schedule, Uganda will start the implementation of a phased preventive mass vaccination campaign (PMVC) by administering 13 million vaccine doses in 2023, for which Gavi has provided funding through a campaign operations grant. This will target areas deemed most vulnerable to outbreaks.

Source: World Health Organisation



How to stop emotional eating from stress

STAR HEALTH DESK

Our relationship with food is complex. On one hand, we need it to survive, but on the other hand, we have found pleasure in our food choices. When we are under stress, we often turn to comfort foods, but the guilt that follows can hinder our efforts to eat healthily. To help break the cycle of stress eating, here are some tips and tricks.

Know what is happening:

Stress affects people differently when it comes to eating habits. Some may eat less, while others turn to comfort food or snacks high in fat. However, these choices are often temporary and can lead to unhealthy decisions. It is important to stay mindful of what and why you are eating to make healthier choices.

Keep a food diary: Keep a record of all the food you consume throughout the day, including the time and place of consumption. This food diary is an excellent method for monitoring your dietary habits and trends. Are you snacking excessively between meals? Is food consistently present in your routine? You will be able to assess the healthiness of your food choices and establish goals that can be highly beneficial.

Check if you are really hungry: If you find yourself reaching for snacks shortly after consuming a large meal, take a moment to reflect on whether you are truly hungry, or if your emotions are driving the cravings. In such situations, it may be beneficial to engage in alternative activities such as taking a walk, talking to a friend or drinking some water until the urge subsides. It is also possible that your body may be signalling dehydration, so it is essential to ensure that you are properly hydrated.



Get support:

Make sure you have family and friends who can keep you positive and focused in times of stress. It can really help you stick to a healthy lifestyle. Research shows that people with high stress jobs have better mental health when they have strong support networks.

Focus on your goals: Avoid becoming overly fixated on calorie counts, menu planning, and constantly weighing yourself, as this can distract you from the lifestyle changes you are trying to make. Focusing too much on these details can also lead to more cravings and becoming stuck in a food rut. Instead, be open to trying new foods and experimenting with different ways of preparing your favourite dishes. When you reach a significant goal, celebrate your progress by treating yourself to a healthy reward.

Don't tempt yourself: Remove the urge to snack on unhealthy foods by keeping them out of your home. Stick to a strict grocery list of healthy foods, and never visit the grocery store when you are hungry or in a bad mood.

Make healthy choices: Have an abundant supply of good-for-you nibblers at the ready if you get hungry between meals. Things like fruit, vegetables with a low-fat dip, nuts, or

even unbuttered popcorn are perfect.

Don't be so hard on yourself: Don't obsess over your failures. Instead, learn from your mistakes. Do not let one or two missteps create more stress. Instead, focus on the big picture and recognize how you can break your stress-eating cycle.

Meditate: When the urge to eat hits you, try some relaxation techniques. Mindful meditation can ease stress and help fight the impulse that triggers stress eating. Choose a quiet place to sit and observe your thoughts and your breathing.

Work up a sweat: A good workout triggers your body to make chemicals called endorphins that interact with your brain to calm and relax you.

Talk it out: Do not be afraid to discuss your eating habits with your doctor or a mental health professional. They may be able to provide therapy and tips to help you identify what is causing your stress. They can also give you ideas on how to make better food choices and reach your healthy goals.

In conclusion, our ties to food are strong, but by recognising our patterns and habits, surrounding ourselves with positive support, focusing on our goals, and making healthy choices, we can break the cycle of stress eating and achieve a healthier relationship with food.



HAVE A NICE DAY EGO-LAND

DR RUBAIUL MURSHED

The ego is the master of all conflicts. This is an inflated feeling of pride and superiority over others. It creates a dissection between the ideas of moral and immoral, war and peace, and so on.

Egoists are quick to blame others or raise their voices when anything bad happens. It constantly strives to make people believe that they are not responsible for their actions. They are close-minded, stubborn, and selfish, and try to make people believe they are not responsible for their actions. There may be nothing wrong with feeling important in a regulated manner but problems arise when it affects decision-making or makes the egoist feel superior to others in order to justify his or her behavior. There are three types of egos - parent, adult, and child ego states.

These ego states consist of individual personalities. Each ego state is an entire system of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours from which we interact with one another. Remarkably, three dangers and three types of anxiety are also correlated with these three masters of the ego - moral anxiety (arising from conscience), neurotic anxiety (arising from instincts), and realistic anxiety (arising from the reality principle).

Gaining control of the ego could be one of the best things that one can do to save relationships. It creates misunderstanding and kills kindness and happiness. It is one of the biggest enemies of harmonisation. It's better to feed our soul, not the 'ego'.

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The future is bright for GOLD-BASED ANTIBIOTICS

STAR HEALTH DESK

Spanish researchers have identified several gold-based compounds with the potential to treat multidrug-resistant bacteria, or "superbugs". The compounds were found to be effective against at least one hard-to-treat bacterium, with some proving effective against several.

Drug-resistant infections kill an estimated 700,000 people worldwide each year, and with the figure projected to rise to 10 million by 2050 if no action is taken, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has classified antibiotic resistance as one of the greatest public health threats facing humanity.

The development of new antibiotics has stalled in recent years, with few new treatments being developed, and the compounds identified by the Spanish researchers are seen as a promising new approach. Gold is known to have antibacterial properties, making gold metalloantibiotics - compounds with a gold ion at their core - a potentially exciting new approach to tackling antibiotic resistance.

The researchers studied the activity of 19 gold complexes against a range of multidrug-resistant bacteria isolated from patients. The complexes all belong to the same family but have slightly different structures. The six bacteria studied were Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA), Staphylococcus Epidermidis, Pseudomonas Aeruginosa, Stenotrophomonas Maltophilia, Acinetobacter Baumannii, and Escherichia Coli, all of which are multidrug-resistant. Four (S. aureus, P. aeruginosa, A. baumannii, and E. coli) are on the World Health Organisation's list of antibiotic-resistant 'priority pathogens'.

In tests, 16 of the 19 gold complexes were highly effective

against MRSA and S. epidermidis. Another 16 of the complexes were effective against the other bacteria, all of which are gram-negative. Gram-negative bacteria have greater inbuilt resistance to antibiotics, and the need for new treatments is particularly pressing.

Gold complexes use a variety of techniques to kill bacteria, including stopping enzymes from working, disrupting the function of the bacterial membrane, and damaging DNA. Crucially, this multimodal mechanism should prevent antimicrobial resistance from developing.

The type of gold complexes studied, known as gold (III) complexes, are relatively straightforward and inexpensive to make. They can also be easily modified, providing a vast amount of scope for drug development. The researchers say that the gold-based drugs hold great potential as new antibiotics.

The findings of the study were presented at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases (ECCMID) in Copenhagen. Dr Sara M. Soto González, of the Barcelona Institute for Global Health, Barcelona, Spain, and colleagues conducted the study.

Dr Soto González concludes: "All of the gold compounds were effective against at least one of the bacterial species studied and some displayed potent activity against several multidrug-resistant bacteria. It is particularly exciting to see that some of the gold complexes were effective against MRSA and multidrug-resistant A. baumannii, as they are the two biggest causes of hospital-acquired infections." The researchers say that with research on other types of gold metalloantibiotics also providing promising results, the future is bright for gold-based antibiotics.



Hearing aids may protect against a higher risk of dementia associated with hearing loss

STAR HEALTH REPORT

A new study published in The Lancet Public Health journal suggests that people with hearing loss who do not use hearing aids may have a higher risk of developing dementia than those without hearing loss. However, the use of hearing aids may reduce this risk to the same level as those without hearing loss.

The research team analysed data from 437,704 participants in the UK Biobank database and found that people with hearing loss who did not use hearing aids had a 42% higher risk of all-cause dementia compared to those with normal hearing. This risk was reduced to the same level as those without hearing loss when hearing aids were used.

The study suggests that hearing loss may be linked to around 8% of worldwide dementia cases, and early introduction of hearing aids when someone starts experiencing hearing impairment is necessary. The researchers also found that the association between hearing aid use and protection from increased dementia was likely mostly due to direct effects from hearing aids rather than indirect causes. Although the study has limitations, the evidence is compelling that treating hearing loss is a promising way of reducing dementia risk, and increasing awareness of and detection of hearing loss, as well as the acceptability and usability of hearing aids, is crucial.



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