

## Impact of household cleaning products on asthma

Comparing traditional, green, and disinfecting wipes

The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology recently published a study that examined the effects of various household cleaning products on asthma. Previous research had already shown a connection between uncontrolled asthma and the use of harsh cleaning chemicals such as bleach and ammonia. Now, researchers wanted to see if "green" cleaning products and disinfecting wipes had similar effects.

In the study, 37,000 people participated in an online survey. Among them, about 1,700 had their asthma under control, while around 500 struggled with uncontrolled asthma. The researchers found that using cleaning products frequently—between 4 and 7 days a week—was mildly associated with controlled asthma but had a much stronger link to uncontrolled asthma.

The findings revealed that people using green cleaning products were 2.4 times more likely to have uncontrolled asthma. Those who used cleaning sprays were 2.7 times more likely, while those using traditional irritant products like bleach and ammonia were 2.8 times more likely. The risk was highest for disinfecting wipes, with a 3.5 times greater chance of having uncontrolled asthma.

Additionally, the study highlighted that individuals who did all their own cleaning without any household help were particularly vulnerable to these effects.



## FOOD SAFETY prepare for the unexpected

STAR HEALTH DESK

On June 7, 2024, World Food Safety Day brought attention to food safety incidents. The theme for this year emphasised the significance of preparedness for food safety incidents, regardless of their severity.

Food safety incidents are situations where there is a potential or confirmed health risk associated with food consumption. A food incident can happen, for example, due to accidents, inadequate controls, food fraud, or natural events. While being ready to manage food safety incidents requires dedicated efforts from policymakers, food safety authorities, farmers, and food business operators, consumers can also play an active role.

Every day, on an average, 1,600,000 people get sick due to unsafe food contaminated with bacteria, viruses, parasites, or chemical substances. It affects all countries.

The United Nations General Assembly established World Food Safety Day in 2018 to raise awareness of the importance of food safety. Food safety incidents that require intervention to

protect the health of consumers can range from minor events to major crises. And because hazards have no regard for the lines humans draw on maps, an increasingly interconnected global food supply means that the risks posed by unsafe food have the potential to rapidly evolve from a local problem to an international emergency.

In 2004, FAO and WHO jointly created the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), a global network of national food safety authorities, to facilitate the rapid exchange of information across borders and between members, recording hundreds of food safety incidents every year.

**Call for actions:**

**Governments:**

- Develop and regularly update national food safety emergency response plans and use "lessons learned" from food safety events to identify gaps and limitations.

- Ensure a coordinated approach across government agencies and national authorities, including mechanisms for the rapid exchange

of information.

- Provide rapid, accurate, and open information to stakeholders during food safety events and report international emergencies to the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN).

**Food operators:**

- Establish and regularly update food safety management plans.

- Know how to avoid food safety incidents by following good hygiene practices.

- Provide regular staff training.

**Consumers:**

- Practice safe food handling at home and follow the WHO's Five Keys to Safer Food: keep clean, separate raw and cooked foods, cook thoroughly, keep food at safe temperatures, and use safe water and raw materials.

- Know how to keep food safe before, during, and after emergencies, such as floods, fires, natural disasters, or the loss of power.

- Know how to report poor hygiene standards and misleading food labelling.

Source: World Health Organisation

## HAVE A NICE DAY The impact of nitpicking

DR RUBAUL MURSHED

A nitpicker is a person who finds faults, however small or unimportant, everywhere they look. After meeting someone, a nitpicker lists every tiny thing s/he did not like about the encounter. When discussing people, they often focus on seemingly minor flaws, even if they are insignificant. This chronic complaining style represents a negative mindset, a lack of gratitude, and a sense of helplessness. It can also damage relationships with others, especially when they criticise people behind their backs, which can be exhausting for those who hear it.

Some nitpickers are just highly arrogant types who think they know what is best for everyone. Others are anxious and troublesome, nitpicking because they need to feel some sense of control. Some are never satisfied. They do not need solutions; instead, they need problems. If someone tries to solve their problems, it undermines their ability to complain, which in turn irritates them.

Nitpickers could be chronic complainers who need listeners, not problem solvers. These chronic complainers tend to ruminate on problems and focus on setbacks over progress. Some research suggests that making a habit of complaining can "re-wire" the brain so that these particular thinking patterns become deeply ingrained.

Complaining can often stem from bad moods or personality traits, but in some cases, it can also be a tool that helps people bond and regulate their emotions. Thus, sometimes people complain with the hope that venting their feelings will lessen the severity of their distressing emotions. However, too much complaining can worsen one's mood, make one feel helpless, and lead to a negative outlook on life.

Frequent complaints weakens the immune system, raising the risk of various illnesses. It even makes people more susceptible to high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and stroke.

E-mail: rubailmurshed@shomman.org



## EMPOWERING LIVES The importance of menstrual hygiene management

DR ROZIA AFROZ RANA

Menstrual hygiene management is one of the most important saviours for women in this century. Saving lives by preventing infection and reducing the cost of hospital stays and medicine expenses, thus reducing mortality rates. If women and girls could get proper sanitation facilities with all the hygiene management needs, their overall lives would be better. On the contrary, productivity in working places would create a positive impact, which would strongly emphasise women's empowerment.

Most of the girls and women do not have access to clean water soap, and they do not even have a private space in a toilet to change and dispose of their used sanitary products in low-income countries. Most of the women in rural areas still cannot afford a sanitary pad or napkin due to high expenses. Understanding the situation with care is a strong mental support that can help a mother's daughter feel comfortable. We should know and remember that menstrual health is a fundamental aspect of human rights, dignity, and public health.

To create awareness and share knowledge to break taboos, May 28 is dedicated to observing World Menstrual Day. Just like other countries, Bangladesh also celebrated this day with full spirit. This year, 2024, the theme was *Together for a Period-Friendly World*.

**In order to promote menstrual health hygiene, women and girls require the following:**

- » Appropriate menstrual product materials (pads, clothes)
- » Additional supportive materials, like a soap water bucket or bin, are needed for storage, washing, and drying.
- » Basic menstrual health education
- » Access to safe and private toilet

and bathing facilities with water for changing, washing, and drying menstrual products.

- » Disposal options for menstrual waste should be convenient and private.

**The illnesses and health issues women typically encounter as a result of inadequate facilities are:**

- » Urinary tract infections
- » Bacterial Vaginosis
- » Fungal Infection
- » Pelvic Inflammatory Diseases
- » When women get infected with any of these diseases, their burden on medical expenses increases. Hospital stay, medicine bill, doctor visit, and absence from work are all affected. Health and finances both face a critical crisis. This is also understand that menstrual hygiene management is not the same from different groups perspectives. Try to follow these steps.

- » Do not forget to wash your hands before and after using a menstrual pad.

- » Remember to change your menstrual product regularly, every 4-6 hours.

- » Always try to wear loose, breathable, clean clothes for comfort.

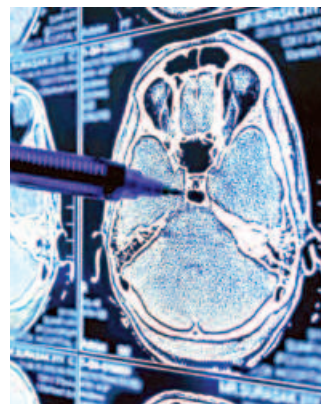
- » Clean and wash your undergarments with soap and clean water; dry them in sunlight and open air.

- » Keep your private parts clean.
- » If possible, take a shower every day.

- » Eat healthy, fresh food, and keep yourself hydrated.

- » In conclusion, I would like to mention that our government policymakers can think about prioritising these issues.

- » Ensuring quality WASH facilities
- » Subsidising local sanitary pad production
- » Train teachers in a gender-sensitive curriculum
- » Ensure more awareness campaigns through behavioural change communication media, such as poster leaflets



## Contribution of AI in diagnosing and treating cancer

Cancer of unknown primary sites often causes pleural and peritoneal effusions, and cytological analysis by pathologists using traditional methods can be inaccurate. Researchers in China used advanced artificial intelligence (AI) methods to study 57,000 cases of fluid buildup in the chest and abdomen, where the origin of the cancer was initially unknown but later identified.

They tested the AI system on nearly 30,000 additional samples to see if it could accurately distinguish between benign (non-cancerous) and malignant (cancerous) cells and determine where the cancer started. They found the AI to be highly accurate, matching the skill level of experienced pathologists and outperforming less experienced ones. When junior pathologists reviewed their diagnoses after seeing the AI's results, their accuracy improved significantly.

Using AI predictions in treatments also showed promising results. Patients whose treatments matched the AI's tumour origin predictions lived longer (27 months on average) compared to those whose treatments did not align with the AI's suggestions (17 months).

In summary, AI technology not only helps pathologists make more accurate diagnoses but also improves patient outcomes by guiding more effective treatments.

Organization Accredited by Joint Commission International

# UROLOGY

**Dr. AB Shahriar Ahmed**  
MRCSEd, FCPS, MS  
Consultant

**Dr. M. A. Zulkifli**  
FCPS, FRCS (England)  
Senior Consultant

**Prof. Maj. Gen. Md. Shahidul Islam (Retd)**  
MCPS, FCPS, FACS (USA)  
Senior Consultant

**Harness the Transformative Benefits of Urological Procedures and Surgeries**

Discover a range of urological surgeries and procedures that can address various conditions eg. Kidney Stone, Prostatitis, Benign Prostatic Enlargement, Prostatic Malignancy, Renal Malignancy, Haematuria, UTI, Urinary Incontinence, Polycystic Kidney Disease, Pyonephrosis, Erectile Dysfunction, Male Infertility

**Reconstructive Surgeries**

- BMG Urethroplasty
- Anastomotic Urethroplasty
- Penile prosthesis surgery
- Hypospadias and Epispadias

**Onco Urological Surgeries**

- Nephrectomy & Nephroureterectomy
- Cystectomy with Urinary Diversion
- Prostatectomy
- Orchidectomy
- Ureteral surgery

**Minimally Invasive Procedures**

- Laparoscopic surgery
- TURP, TURBT (Cystoscopic surgery)

**Kidney Stone Treatments**

- Lithotripsy
- PCNL (Percutaneous nephrolithotomy)
- Ureteroscopy
- RIRS (Laser Stone Surgery)

**Paediatric Urology**

- Fulguration of PUV
- Pyeloplasty for PUJ obstruction
- Ureteroneocystostomy for congenital megaureter
- Torsion Testis

**UNITED HOSPITAL LIMITED**  
Plot 15 Road 71 Gulshan Dhaka 1212

Appointment  
02 22 22 82 466  
**10666**