

WORLD HAND HYGIENE DAY 2026

Action saves lives

STAR HEALTH DESK

Clean hands may seem simple, but they remain one of the most powerful shields in health care. As the world marks World Hand Hygiene Day on 5 May 2026, the message is clear: small actions can save countless lives.

Every day, patients face hidden risks when receiving care. Many of these risks can be avoided through something as basic as proper hand cleaning. Yet, gaps remain. Limited access to water, soap, and clean facilities continues to challenge many settings, making this simple act harder than it should be.

This year's campaign calls on health workers and institutions to renew their commitment. Clean hands are not just about routine; they are about respect, safety, and dignity for both patients and



caregivers. With better training, steady supplies, and stronger leadership, safer care is within reach.

Since 2009, this global effort has united people under one goal: making health care safer for everyone. The 2026 message is bold and urgent – "action saves lives."

It is a reminder that change does not always require complex solutions, but consistent, mindful habits. From busy hospitals to small clinics, every clean pair of hands can break a chain of harm. Investing in basic hygiene is not just practical, it is essential for safer care. The responsibility lies with both systems and individuals to make it a daily priority. In the end, protecting lives may begin with something as simple as turning on a tap.



The toothache we ignore until it shouts

DR MUHAMMAD HASANUL BANNA

There is a familiar story in many households. It begins with a mild toothache, the kind that feels easy to ignore. A quick rinse with warm salt water, a home remedy suggested by a relative, perhaps a drop of clove oil. The pain fades, and with it, concern. Days pass, life continues, and the issue slips out of mind. Then, suddenly, the pain returns, stronger, sharper, impossible to overlook. Only then does the thought of visiting a dentist arise.

This pattern is not unusual. In fact, it is deeply rooted in everyday behaviour across South Asia. Dental care is often treated as something reactive rather than preventive. People do not seek help unless there is discomfort. What starts as a small problem quietly grows into something far more serious.

Part of this mindset comes from how many people were raised. While brushing teeth was encouraged, the importance of regular check-ups was rarely discussed. Teeth were seen as resilient, able to manage on their own. If there was no pain, there was

no reason to worry. That belief still lingers today.

Fear also plays a powerful role. The idea of sitting in a dental chair, the sound of instruments, and stories shared by others often create anxiety. This fear leads to delay, and delay allows problems to worsen.

Cost is another concern. For many, dental care feels like an expense that can be postponed. A painkiller or quick remedy seems more convenient and affordable. However, what appears to be a small saving often results in a much larger cost later when treatment becomes unavoidable.

A common habit further complicates the issue. Instead of consulting a professional, people often turn to local pharmacies. They take medicines to reduce pain and hope the problem will disappear. The relief is temporary, giving a false sense of recovery. Meanwhile, the underlying issue remains untreated and continues to progress.

Life's daily pressures also contribute to this neglect. Work, family responsibilities, and constant stress push oral care down the list of

priorities. A mild discomfort does not feel urgent enough to act on, so it is ignored.

What many fail to realise is that most dental problems begin quietly. Early stages often show little to no pain. By the time discomfort appears, the damage is usually advanced. What could have been a simple solution turns into a complicated and lengthy process.

This cycle needs to change. Oral health is not separate from overall well-being. It influences how people eat, speak, and interact with the world. Ignoring it comes at a cost that goes beyond discomfort.

The shift required is simple but significant. Visiting a dentist should not depend on pain. Regular check-ups can identify problems early, making them easier and less costly to manage. Paying attention to small warning signs can prevent bigger issues later.

Pain should not be the first signal to act. It is often the final warning. Recognising this early can make all the difference.

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STRETCH, BREATHE, BENEFIT
Yoga's role in lowering blood pressure

A simple yoga routine may do more than calm the mind; it could quietly help lower blood pressure in people living with excess weight, according to new research.

Drawing on findings from 30 studies across several countries, researchers observed that regular yoga practice was linked to noticeable improvements in blood pressure levels. On average, participants who practised yoga showed a modest but meaningful drop in both upper and lower readings, suggesting a positive shift in heart health.

The analysis included over 2,600 adults, many from Asian settings, where yoga is widely practised. Beyond blood pressure, small improvements were also seen in fat levels in the blood; changes that may reduce the risk of serious illnesses over time.

While the findings are encouraging, the researchers caution that yoga alone is not a cure. The exact amount needed for benefit remains unclear, though many studies involved sessions totalling around three hours per week.

Still, the appeal is clear. Yoga is a gentle, low-cost, and widely accessible form of movement that fits easily into daily life.

As evidence grows, it may be time to see yoga not just as a wellness trend, but as a quiet ally in improving overall health.



The gender gap in empty nest syndrome: WHY MOTHERS FEEL IT MORE



DR SUMAIYA KHALED

When children leave home, the silence they leave behind does not fall evenly on both parents. For many mothers, the shift is deeper, quieter, and far more personal.

Years of caregiving often shape a mother's daily life. From school routines to emotional support, much of her identity becomes closely tied to her children's presence. When that rhythm suddenly stops, it is not just a change in routine but a loss of purpose. What once filled every hour now leaves long stretches of stillness.

Fathers, while equally attached, are often less affected in the same way. Social roles and expectations have traditionally placed men outside the home for much of their working lives. As a result, their sense of identity is less centred on caregiving. Mothers, on the other hand, may find that their primary role has quietly disappeared overnight.

This emotional gap can lead to feelings of loneliness, restlessness, and even symptoms linked to Depression. It is not uncommon for mothers to describe a sense of being "left behind", even when their children are thriving elsewhere. The pride of seeing a child grow often sits alongside an unexpected

emptiness.

Cultural context adds another layer. In many South Asian households, motherhood is deeply woven into a woman's sense of self. Sacrifice, care, and constant presence are seen as strengths. When children move away for studies or work, especially abroad, the physical distance can amplify emotional disconnection.

Yet this phase is not solely defined by loss. For some women, it becomes a turning point. Freed from daily responsibilities, they begin to rediscover interests long set aside. Some return to education, take up work, or invest time in friendships and personal growth. What initially feels like an ending can gradually open into a new beginning.

The difference lies in support and awareness. Recognising that this transition carries emotional weight is the first step. Conversations within families, maintaining meaningful contact, and encouraging independence for both parent and child can ease the shift.

Empty nest syndrome is not just about absence. It reflects how deeply love and identity can intertwine. And for many mothers, learning to separate the two becomes the quiet, necessary work of moving forward.

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The beginning of the end for tobacco in the UK

STAR HEALTH REPORT

The United Kingdom has taken a bold step that could reshape the future of smoking. In a landmark move, King Charles III approved a new law that will gradually end the sale of tobacco to future generations.

Under this plan, anyone born after 2008 will never be able to buy tobacco legally, marking a major shift in how countries protect young people. Supporters say the move is about giving children a healthier start in life, free from a habit known to cause serious illness.

The decision has drawn praise worldwide, with experts calling it a turning point in the fight against tobacco. Similar steps have already appeared in smaller regions, but the UK is the largest nation to act.

Advocates hope this bold policy will inspire others to follow, creating a future where fewer lives are lost to smoking and more people can grow up healthier, stronger, and free from its grip. They argue that such action sends a clear message that protecting health must come before profit, and that lasting change is possible.

The body won't forget: the hidden story behind weight regain

STAR HEALTH DESK

Losing weight is often seen as a fresh start; a chance to reset the body and move towards better health. But new research suggests the body may have a longer memory than we think, quietly holding on to its past and shaping the future in unexpected ways.

Presented ahead of the European Congress on Obesity, the study explores why some people struggle to keep weight off even after undergoing weight-loss surgery. The answer, it seems, may lie deep within the body's own "memory".

Researchers found that in women who had early signs of high blood sugar, the body's fat-storing tissues behaved differently even after significant weight loss. While the surgery helped reduce weight and improve overall health in the short term, these tissues did not fully return to normal.

In simple terms, the body appeared to "remember" its earlier state. This memory made it harder for the body to handle fats efficiently, increasing the likelihood of weight creeping back over time.

The study followed women who had undergone weight-loss surgery and tracked their progress for several years. Initially, the results were encouraging. Participants lost a large



portion of their body weight, and their blood sugar levels improved. But over time, differences began to emerge.

Women with earlier signs of high blood sugar were more likely to regain weight compared to those without such a history. On average, they regained several kilograms within a few years, while others experienced only minimal weight gain.

This suggests that weight loss is not just about diet, exercise, or even surgery; it is also about how the body adapts internally. And sometimes, that adaptation may be incomplete.

The findings open up a new way of thinking about weight management.

Instead of focusing only on losing weight, there may be a need to address the body's underlying tendencies; its built-in patterns that quietly influence how it stores and uses energy.

Encouragingly, researchers believe this "memory" may not be permanent. With the right approach including healthy eating, lifestyle changes, and possibly new treatments; it may be possible to help the body reset itself more fully.

For now, the message is clear: weight loss is only part of the journey. Keeping it off may require understanding not just what we do, but how our bodies remember.

খ্যালাসেমিয়া একটি মারাত্মক রক্তস্বল্পতাজনিত বংশগত রোগ, যা শুধুমাত্র বাহক পিতা-মাতার মাধ্যমে সন্তানের হয়ে থাকে।

বিশেষ রক্ত পরীক্ষার (Hb Electrophoresis) মাধ্যমে জেনে নিন আপনি খ্যালাসেমিয়ার বাহক কিনা।

বাহক হলে অবশ্যই নিশ্চিত করতে হবে যেন জীবন সঙ্গী/সঙ্গিনী খ্যালাসেমিয়ার বাহক না হয়।

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