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HEALTH COMMUNITY
OF WEST AFRICA

HCOWA: Advancing Healthcare Standards in West Africa

HCOWA, the Health Community of West Africa, is a dynamic organization dedicated to promoting healthcare standards and enhancing access to quality medical services across the sub-region. With a commitment to improving the health and well-being of communities in West Africa, HCOWA serves as a catalyst for transformative change in the healthcare sector.

Our primary focus lies in industry brand promotion, supply and demand linkage, investment and trade policy alignment, and industrial cooperation guidance. Through strategic partnerships and collaborations, we facilitate the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and resources to drive innovation and sustainable development in the medical industry.

At HCOWA, we recognize the importance of academic exchange promotion and other key areas in shaping the future of healthcare in West Africa. Through a blend of online and offline initiatives, we foster dia-

logue, facilitate networking opportunities, and explore avenues for cooperation between China and West Africa in the medical sector.

Our mission is to create a new window for medical cooperation between China and West Africa, paving the way for mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborations. By leveraging the strengths and resources of both regions, we aim to address the healthcare challenges facing West Africa and improve healthcare access and quality for all.

We remain steadfast: to be at the forefront of healthcare transformation in West Africa, driving positive change and making a meaningful impact on the lives of millions.

Join us in our mission to advance healthcare standards, foster innovation, and build a healthier future for West Africa. Together, we can create a brighter tomorrow for generations to come.

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Africa Malnutrition Crisis: Urgent Actions Needed to Combat a Growing Epidemic

By Prince Opoku Dogbey

Africa faces a profound and multifaceted malnutrition crisis that demands urgent attention and action. Malnutrition, in all its forms, poses a significant threat to Africa's future. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), malnutrition includes undernutrition (wasting, stunting, underweight), inadequate vitamins or minerals, overweight, obesity, and resulting diet-related noncommunicable diseases. In 2022, 2.5 billion adults were overweight, with 890 million living with obesity, while 390 million were underweight. Alarmingly, 149 million children under five were estimated to be stunted, 45 million wasted, and 37 million overweight or living with obesity.

In Kenya, the Ministry of Health is making strides to address this crisis with the development of the Kenya Nutrition Action Plan (KNAP), a five-year plan aimed at scaling up efforts to combat malnutrition and promote good nutrition practices. As reported by Capital News, this plan builds on the success of the previous KNAP (2018-2022), which significantly reduced the prevalence of stunting.

However, the broader picture across Africa remains dire. More than 1 billion people on the continent struggle to afford a healthy diet, according to World Vision. Approximately 30% of African children suffer from stunted growth due to malnutrition, and 20% of the population is undernourished. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated food insecurity, with an estimated 868 million people experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity in 2022. Over one-third of these individuals face severe food insecurity, highlighting the urgent need for effective and sustainable solutions.

In the Horn of Africa, millions face acute hunger amid one of the worst droughts in decades, compounded by armed conflict, the effects of COVID-19, and soaring food prices due to the war in Ukraine. In West and Central Africa, 49.5 million people may go hungry by August 2024, with coastal areas hardest hit. Conflict, extreme weather events, and high prices drive significant food insecurity in this region. Funding shortages have strained aid efforts, increasing the risk of child malnutrition. In Niger, 82% of the population faces insufficient food consumption due to recent price surges, with 1.9 million children under five expected to be acutely malnourished.

Governments, international organizations, and local stakeholders must collaborate to implement effective strategies that address the root causes of malnutrition and promote sustainable solutions. These include strengthening food security, enhancing healthcare services, addressing socioeconomic factors, promoting peace and stability, and building resilience to climate change. By working together, we can ensure a healthier, more prosperous future for all Africans.





Muscles

By Pavel Chamabe

Muscles are an essential part of the human body that play vital roles in movement, stability, and general health. Muscles consist of bundles of fibres that can contract and relax to produce force. There are three types of muscles: skeletal, cardiac, and smooth. Muscles make up about 40% of the body weight.

Voluntary actions such as walking, running, and lifting items are made possible by skeletal muscles, which are connected to bones by tendons. They function in pairs: antagonist muscles relax to enable controlled motion, while agonist muscles contract to provide movement. Because muscle fibres enlarge during a process known as hypertrophy, skeletal muscles may adapt to almost any situation and get stronger over time with consistent use.

The walls of the heart are made up of cardiac muscle, which is in charge of the automatic contractions that circulate blood throughout the body. Heart muscles, in contrast to skeletal muscles, contract automatically and rhythmically to maintain oxygen delivery and circulation.

Smooth muscles help in involuntary actions like breathing, digestion, and blood flow control by lining internal organs and blood arteries. The autonomic nervous system regulates these muscles, which react to different stimuli in order to preserve homeostasis.

Frequent exercise is essential for maintaining the strength, endurance, and flexibility of muscles. Weightlifting is one type of strength training activity that promotes muscular development and enhances total muscle function. Furthermore, healthy

eating, which includes consuming enough protein, promotes the growth and repair of muscles.

Beyond just affecting physical performance, muscle health also affects metabolism, bone density, and even emotional stability. Muscular dystrophy is one condition that emphasises how vital it is to preserve muscle integrity for both mobility and overall quality of life.

In summary, muscles are essential to almost every facet of human functioning, ranging from simple movement to intricate physiological mechanisms. Being aware of the composition, purpose, and upkeep of muscles enables people to emphasise muscular health as the foundation of their general well-being.

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Muscle health also affects metabolism, bone density, and even emotional stability”

Air Pollution: Second Leading Cause of Global Death Revealed in Latest Report.

Air pollution has become the second-leading global risk factor for death, as highlighted in the latest State of Global Air (SoGA) report released by the Health Effects Institute (HEI). Produced in collaboration with UNICEF, the report underscores the alarming impact of air pollution on human health, revealing that it was responsible for 8.1 million deaths worldwide in 2021 alone. Beyond mortality, air pollution also inflicts chronic diseases on millions, placing immense strains on healthcare systems, economies, and societies worldwide.

Children under five are particularly vulnerable, facing risks such as premature birth, low birth weight, asthma, and various lung diseases due to exposure to air pollution. Shockingly, more than 700,000 deaths among young children in 2021 were linked to air pollution, with a significant proportion—500,000 deaths—attributed to household air pollution from cooking with polluting fuels, predominantly affecting regions in Africa and Asia.

The SoGA report draws on data from the Global Burden of Disease study, revealing the severe health impacts of pollutants like fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), ozone, and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) across over 200 countries and territories. PM_{2.5}, tiny particles less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter, constitute the largest share of air pollution-related deaths globally, affecting multiple organ systems and elevating the risks for diseases such as heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

The sources of PM_{2.5} emissions are diverse, including transportation, residential heating, industrial activities, and natural events like wildfires. These emissions not only endanger public health but also contribute significantly to climate change. Vulnerable populations, such as children and the elderly, are disproportionately affected by both the health impacts of air pollution and the broader climate hazards exacerbated by these emissions.

Despite these challenges, progress has been notable. Since 2000, child mortality linked to air pollution has decreased by 53%, largely due to efforts aimed at improving access to clean energy sources for cooking and healthcare services. Many countries, particularly those experiencing high levels of air pollution, are implementing effective strategies such as air quality monitoring networks, stringent air quality regulations, and promoting the adoption of cleaner technologies to mitigate pollution levels.

Nevertheless, urgent and concerted action is imperative to curb the detrimental effects of air pollution on global health. Governments, businesses, and communities must prioritize initiatives aimed at reducing air pollution to safeguard public health, particularly among vulnerable groups. The SoGA report serves as a clarion call for decisive measures to address air pollution comprehensively and ensure a healthier and sustainable future for all.



Beyond Nutrition: The Multifaceted Importance of Breastfeeding for Babies

By Gloria Addo

Proper nutrition during the early stages of life is crucial for ensuring children's optimal growth, well-being, and development. Breastfeeding is widely acknowledged to be beneficial for both the mother and the child, as the mother's milk is seen to be the optimal dietary supply for a baby.

Exclusive breastfeeding can be defined as a practice whereby infants receive only breast milk without mixing it with water, other liquids, tea, herbal preparations, or food in the first six months of life, with the exception of vitamins, mineral supplements, or medicines.

The World Health Organization advises breastfeeding for the best possible growth, development, and health in infants. Breastfeeding for at least two years can have several advantages for both mother and child.

To begin with, with breastfeeding releases the hormone oxytocin, which facilitates the contraction of your uterus following delivery. This indicates that breastfeeding helps the uterus shrink back to its natural size and lessens postpartum haemorrhage. Babies that are breastfed develop a sense of trust in their caregivers as mothers teach them to read their body language. This influences the early behaviour of your child.

In addition, breastfeeding offers a unique and special means of fostering a bond with your child. Breastfeeding establishes a correlation that some researchers have found may help lessen behavioural and social problems in both adults and children. Finally, compared to the price of formula and infant food, breastfeeding is extremely affordable and efficient.

Another intriguing fact although there isn't much data to support it is that nursing burns calories, which subsequently contribute to weight loss, so it might make it simpler for you to lose the weight that you gained during pregnancy.

The American Academy of Paediatrics advises exclusive breastfeeding for six months and then continuing for as long as the two of you want to, up to and including the child's third year of life. The longer you breastfeed, the more advantageous it is for both you and your child.

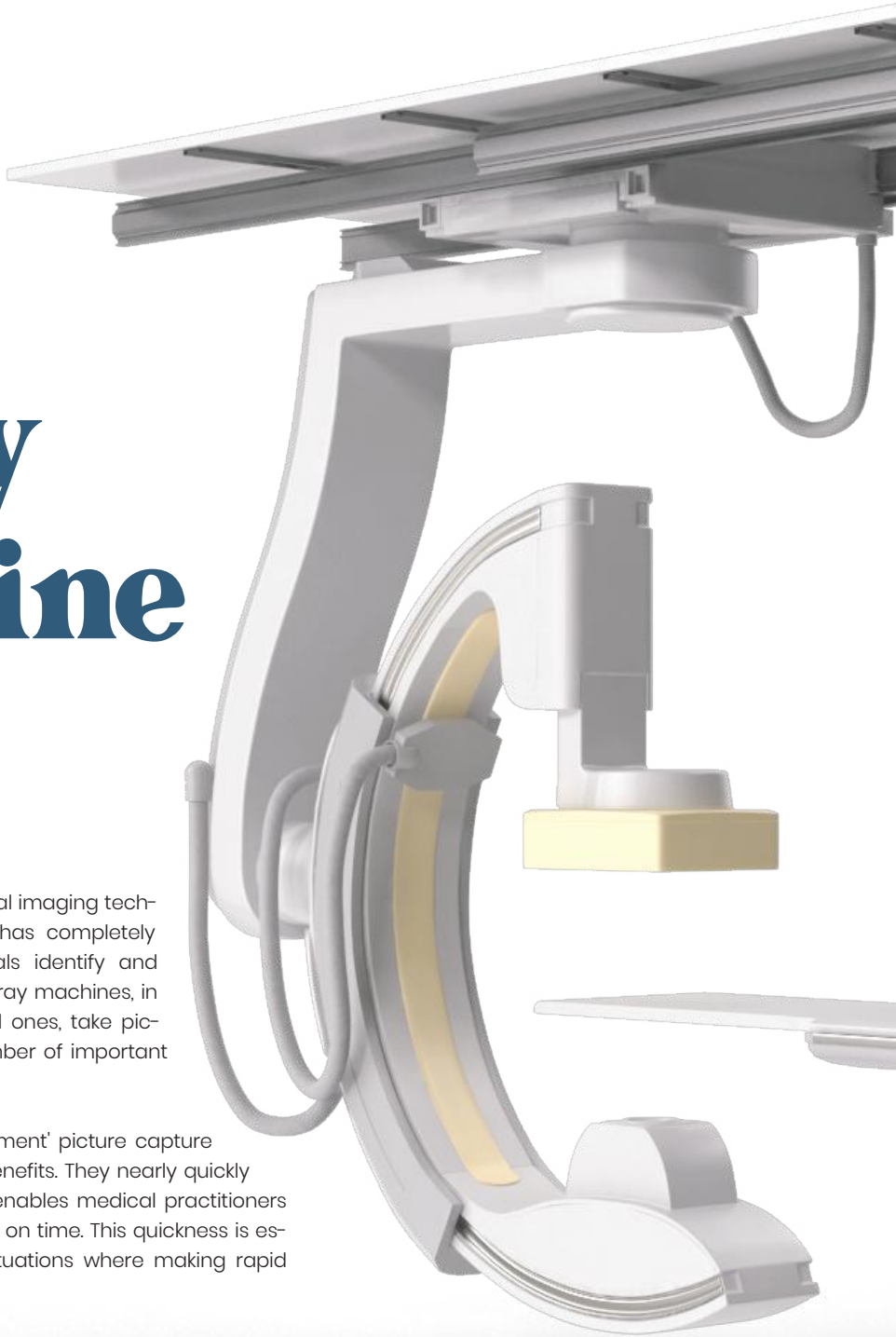
Digital X-Ray Machine

By Pavel Chamabe

An important development in medical imaging technology, a digital X-ray equipment has completely changed how medical professionals identify and track a variety of ailments. Digital X-ray machines, in contrast to conventional film-based ones, take pictures electronically and have a number of important advantages.

The efficiency of digital X-ray equipment' picture capture and processing is one of its main benefits. They nearly quickly provide high-quality photos, which enables medical practitioners to see results and diagnose patients on time. This quickness is especially important in emergency situations where making rapid judgements might save lives.

Comparing digital X-ray equipment to traditional film-based systems, they also minimise radiation exposure to patients. These devices improve safety for both patients and medical professionals by maximising radiation dosages and reducing the need for repeat shots by providing instantaneous picture evaluation.





These X-ray devices' digital nature makes it simple to save, retrieve, and share pictures inside electronic health record (EHR) systems. This accessibility enhances overall patient care by promoting smooth communication between specialists and improving teamwork among healthcare teams.

Furthermore, sophisticated picture enhancement and editing methods are supported by digital X-ray technology. To gain a better understanding of complicated circumstances, radiologists can use image filters, modify contrast levels, and zoom in on specific regions of interest. This capacity minimises the requirement for follow-up imaging while improving diagnosis accuracy.

Digital X-ray equipment with shorter test times and ergonomic designs also help to minimise patient discomfort and anxiety during treatments. This enhances overall satisfaction with healthcare services and makes for a better patient experience.

Digital X-ray equipment continue to lead the way in diagnostic imaging innovation as technology develops, constantly enhancing patient outcomes, diagnostic accuracy, and efficiency. Their incorporation into contemporary healthcare environments highlights their vital significance in improving medical procedures all throughout the world.



Health Alert:

New Sexually Transmitted Infection "Trichophyton Mentagrophytes Type VII" Discovered

A sexually transmitted ringworm caused by a certain fungus has been reported for the first time in the United States.

Researchers describe the first reported case of a sexually transmitted ringworm caused by a certain fungus, as *Trichophyton mentagrophytes* type VII.

In a release by the Department of Dermatology at New York University (NYU), a dermatologist and assistant professor, Avrom Caplan, MD, cautioned that healthcare providers should be aware that *Trichophyton mentagrophytes* type VII is the latest in a group of severe skin infections.

Experts at NYU Langone Health who focus on the spread of contagious rashes document that the sexually transmitted fungal infection that can take months to clear up even with treatment. In the second report, NYU Langone physicians partnered with authorities at the New York State Department of Health to describe the largest group of patients in the country with a similar fungal strain that resists standard therapies.

Source: Healthline.com

A report released by JAMA Dermatology Trusted Source also describes the first documented case in the United States as a sexually transmitted fungus. Genetic tests confirmed that the fungus causing the rash was *T. mentagrophytes*, genotype VII.

The case involved a man in his 30s from New York City who developed an itchy rash on his genitals, buttocks, and limbs after returning from a trip to England, Greece, and California.

The man "reported multiple male sexual partners while traveling, none with a similar infection, and visited a sauna 2 months prior to developing skin lesions," the researchers write.

The researchers said this type of infection may also cause a rash that looks more like an eczema flare than a ringworm infection with the characteristic circular pattern on the skin.

While the infection is not fatal, it can cause permanent scarring, they added



LIQUID LIFELINE: ‘HOW WATER SUSTAINS AND REVITALIZES OUR HEALTH’

By Gloria Addo



We constantly come across the phrase; ‘Water is Life’ but have we given a thought to why this statement rings true? Here are some mind-blowing reasons why you should make water a priority in your quest for healthy living.

Drinking water helps maintain the balance of body fluids. Your body is composed of about 60% water. The functions of these bodily fluids include digestion, absorption, circulation, creation of saliva, transportation of nutrients, and maintenance of body temperature.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, water does more for your body than merely relieve your thirst and control body temperature. It also helps your body maintain optimal levels of moisture in the blood, bones, and brain, as well as in the tissues that make up these delicate areas. Furthermore, water serves as a lubricant and cushion for your joints in addition to protecting your spinal cord.

A study from Mayo Health Clinic shows that water makes up 75% of the brain and maintaining proper electrolyte balance is essential for healthy bodily functioning, as dehydration has a negative influence on memory, attention, and vitality.

The National Kidney Foundation, USA emphasizes the importance of adequate water intake for kidney function, highlighting its role in removing waste from blood and maintaining clear blood vessels.

Water supports proper bowel function. Maintaining proper hydration facilitates the smooth operation of your digestive system and helps you avoid constipation. Constipation is the outcome of the colon taking water from excrement to stay hydrated when you don't drink enough fluids.

The Institute of Medicine, USA recommends men drink 13 cups of water daily, women 9 cups, pregnant women 10 cups, breastfeeding women 12 cups, and kids and teens 6-8 cups, depending on activity level, health conditions, height, weight, and gender. There are many drinks available for you to choose from but water is ultimately the liquid of choice for the optimal level of hydration. Reaching your daily target will not only help you keep your current state of health, but it will also enhance your general well-being.

Challenging Misconceptions: The Truth Behind Albinism.

By Gloria Addo

Albinism is a rare genetic disorder in which you aren't born with the usual amount of melanin pigment. Melanin is a chemical in your body that determines the color of your skin, hair and eyes. Every ethnic and racial background is susceptible to albinism, with most people developing a higher risk of sunburn and skin cancer.

There are several myths surrounding albinism, and these myths often stem from misunderstandings and misconceptions about the condition. Come along, and let's bust some myths concerning albinism.

Albinism is contagious: Unlike infectious diseases, albinism is a hereditary condition that cannot be spread. It's inherited when both parents carry the gene mutation that causes albinism.

People with albinism have red eyes. The majority of people with albinism have blue eyes, while some may have a reddish tint to their eyes due to iris pigment loss. The retina's reflection of light is that it gives the appearance of red.

People who are albinos have low vision: Though not everyone with albinism experiences vision issues, many do. The extent of visual impairment differs from person to person. While some people may be legally blind, others may have comparatively decent eyesight.

People with albinism cannot lead normal lives: People with albinism are capable of leading successful, meaningful lives if they have the right assistance and accommodations. Like everyone else, many people with albinism attend school, work, and engage in other activities. Albinos have intellectual disabilities: Albinism affects pig-

mentation, not intelligence. There is no connection between intellectual impairment and albinism. The cognitive capacities of those with albinism are comparable to those of the general population.

People with albinism have short lifespans: There's no evidence to suggest that individuals with albinism have shorter lifespans than the general population. With proper medical care and sun protection, individuals with albinism can live long, healthy lives.

It's important to dispel these myths and educate others about the realities of living with albinism to foster understanding, acceptance, and support for individuals with the condition.





AFRICA
in focus

Afreximbank and Africa CDC Announce \$2 Billion

Facility to Boost Africa's Health and
Pharmaceutical Products Manufacturing

In a landmark partnership announced today at the Global Forum for Vaccine Sovereignty and Innovation in Paris, France, the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) have unveiled a new cooperation agreement. This initiative marks a significant milestone in Africa's journey towards enhancing health security and bolstering local health product manufacturing capabilities.

Under the agreement, Afreximbank has committed a substantial \$2 billion facility to the "Africa Health Security Investment Plan". This funding aims to support the continent's ambition to manufacture essential health products locally, focusing on initiatives such as the African Pooled Procurement Mechanism (APPM) and the Platform for Harmonized African Health Products Manufacturing (PHAHM).

Prof. Benedict Oramah, President of Afreximbank, highlighted the transformative impact of this initiative: "We are proud to participate in this historic event that will reshape health security in Africa. Our commitment will strengthen local manufacturing of health and pharmaceutical products through comprehensive financial interventions."

This partnership also aligns with the African Union's goal to produce 60% of vaccines locally by 2040, a crucial

step towards achieving self-reliance in health emergencies like pandemics.

Dr. Jean Kaseya, Director General of Africa CDC, emphasized the significance of these investments: "Today marks a major milestone for vaccine and health product manufacturing in Africa. These investments are pivotal in securing our future and advancing our mission to safeguard Africa's health."

The "Africa Health Security Investment Plan" will leverage Afreximbank's financial tools, including equity investments through its subsidiary FEDA (Fund for Export Development in Africa), project preparation funding, trade finance, guarantees, and venture capital. This comprehensive approach aims to attract and boost health investments across the continent.

Key pillars of the initiative include technical assistance and advisory services provided by Africa CDC, a streamlined investment project pipeline accessible through Afreximbank's Project Portal, and regulatory support to facilitate trade and investment under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

This strategic collaboration underscores a concerted effort to overcome challenges such as low investor confidence, inadequate infrastructure, and regulatory barriers hindering health sector investments in Africa.

HIV AIDS

CAN BE PREVENTED!

By Mavis Essaba Mensah

HIV/AIDS remains one of the most significant public health challenges worldwide. However, the narrative around HIV/AIDS is not one of despair, but of hope and empowerment. The message is clear: HIV/AIDS can be prevented! With the right information, tools, and proactive measures, individuals and communities can significantly reduce the risk of infection and contribute to ending the epidemic.

Understanding HIV/AIDS

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) attacks the body's immune system, specifically the CD4 cells (T cells), which are crucial for fighting infections. If untreated, HIV reduces the number of these cells, making the body more vulnerable to infections and certain cancers. AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) is the most severe phase of HIV infection, characterized by a severely compromised immune system.

Prevention Strategies

1. Safe Sex Practices

- Using condoms consistently and correctly during vaginal, anal, and oral sex significantly reduces the risk of HIV transmission. Condoms act as a barrier, preventing the virus from passing between partners.
- Reducing the number of sexual partners and engaging in mutual monogamy with a partner who has tested HIV-negative can also lower the risk.

2. Regular Testing and Early Detection

- Regular HIV testing is crucial. Knowing your status and that of your partner(s) allows for informed decisions and early intervention if necessary.
- Early detection through testing enables timely treatment with antiretroviral therapy



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(ART), which can keep the virus at undetectable levels, effectively eliminating the risk of transmission.

3. Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

- PrEP is a daily medication that significantly reduces the risk of HIV infection in people at high risk. When taken consistently, PrEP can lower the chances of getting HIV from sex by more than 90%.

4 . Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)

- PEP involves taking antiretroviral medicines within 72 hours after potential exposure to HIV. It is an emergency measure that can prevent the virus from taking hold in the body if started promptly.

5. Avoiding Needle Sharing

- For individuals who inject drugs, using sterile needles and not sharing injection equipment can prevent HIV transmission. Many communities have needle exchange programs to support safe practices.

6. Education and Awareness

- Education campaigns and awareness programs play a pivotal role in HIV prevention. Understanding how HIV is transmitted and knowing the preventive measures are essential for reducing stigma and encouraging safe behaviors.

Community and Global Efforts

Community support and global initiatives are vital in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Organizations worldwide are working tirelessly to provide resources, education, and support to those affected by HIV/AIDS. Collaborative efforts between governments, healthcare providers, and communities can create an environment where prevention strategies are widely accessible and effectively implemented.

Conclusion

Preventing HIV/AIDS is not just a possibility—it's a reality within our reach. By embracing safe practices, encouraging regular testing, and promoting education and awareness, we can make significant strides toward ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Empower yourself and your community with the knowledge and tools to prevent HIV/AIDS, and be a part of the solution to this global health challenge.



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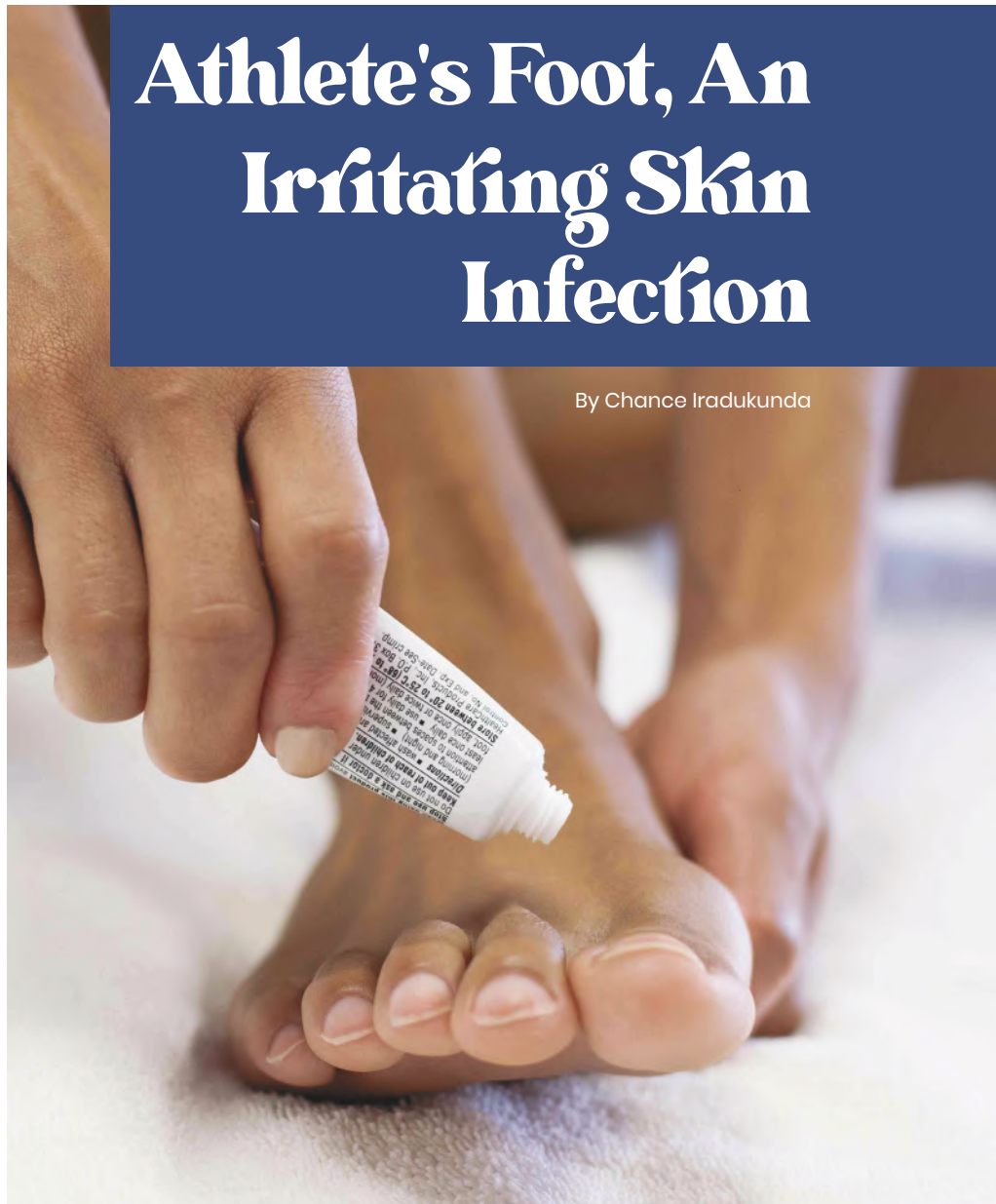


Athlete's foot, medically known as *tinea pedis*, is a common fungal infection that affects millions worldwide, particularly athletes and individuals who frequently wear tight-fitting shoes or have sweaty feet. Athlete's foot is caused by numerous types of fungi, which typically thrive in warm, moist environments such as locker rooms, swimming pools, and communal showers.

When the skin comes into contact with these fungi, usually through contaminated surfaces or direct contact with infected individuals, it can lead to the development of athlete's foot. The condition manifests as redness, itching, burning, and scaling of the skin, often between the toes or on the soles of the feet.

Treating athlete's foot involves both topical and oral antifungal medications, depending on the severity and extent of the infection. Over-the-counter antifungal creams, sprays, or powders are effective for mild cases and can help alleviate symptoms and eradicate the fungus. For more persistent or severe infections, prescription-strength antifungal medications may be necessary, either in topical form or as oral tablets.

Preventing athlete's foot begins with practicing good foot hygiene and adopting preventive measures to minimize the risk of fungal infections. This includes keeping the feet clean and dry, especially between the toes, by thoroughly drying them after bathing or swimming, and wearing clean socks made of breathable materials such as cotton or moisture-wicking fabrics. Additionally, wearing well-ventilated shoes and avoiding walking barefoot in communal areas can help reduce exposure to fungi. Regularly changing socks and



Athlete's Foot, An Irritating Skin Infection

By Chance Iradukunda

shoes, disinfecting footwear, and using antifungal powders or sprays as a preventive measure can further safeguard against infection.

Certain predisposing factors can increase the likelihood of developing athlete's foot, such as weakened immune function, excessive sweating, and pre-existing skin conditions like eczema or psoriasis. Addressing these underlying factors, such as managing stress,

maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and seeking treatment for underlying skin conditions, can help reduce the risk of recurrent fungal infections.

Through the practice of good foot hygiene, wearing appropriate footwear, and seeking timely treatment when needed, individuals can overcome athlete's foot and enjoy healthier, happier feet.

Disease In Focus

Alzheimer's disease is a chronic neurodegenerative disorder that progressively destroys brain cells, leading to a decline in memory and cognitive abilities. Unlike normal aging, Alzheimer's is irreversible and profoundly impacts daily life.

Causes of Alzheimer's Disease

The disease is characterized by the accumulation of beta-amyloid plaques and tau tangles in the brain, disrupting nerve cell communication and causing cell death and brain tissue loss. While exact causes are not fully understood, factors such as genetics, age (predominantly affecting those over 65), and environmental influences play significant roles.

Symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease

Symptoms develop gradually and worsen over time, including:

- **Memory Loss:**
Forgetting recently learned information or important events.
- **Difficulty with Daily Tasks:**
Challenges in performing routine activities like cooking or managing finances.
- **Confusion:**
Disorientation about time, place, or familiar surroundings.
- **Language Problems:**
Difficulty finding words or following conversations.

Alzheimer's Disease

By Yosua Domedjui

- **Mood Changes:**

Anxiety, depression, or shifts in personality.

Advanced stages may lead to severe memory impairment, speech difficulties, swallowing problems, and dependency on caregivers.

Management and Treatment

While there is no cure, treatments can enhance quality of life and manage symptoms:

- **Medications:**

Cholinesterase inhibitors and memantine help with cognitive symptoms and memory.

- **Behavioral Approaches:**

Structured routines and simplified tasks support independence longer.

- **Ongoing Research:**

Aims to uncover disease mechanisms and develop new therapies for slowing or preventing progression. Early diagnosis and intervention are crucial for effective management and planning.

In Conclusion

Alzheimer's disease presents profound challenges for individuals, families, and healthcare systems globally. Understanding its origins, identifying early signs, and implementing effective management strategies can improve outcomes and quality of life. Continued research and support are vital to finding a cure and easing the burden of this devastating disease.





AED, A Mobile Electronic Life Savior.

By Chance Iradukunda

An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is a portable electronic device designed to diagnose and treat life-threatening cardiac arrhythmias, specifically ventricular fibrillation and pulseless ventricular tachycardia. These devices deliver a therapeutic dose of electrical energy to the heart, effectively restoring its normal rhythm. AEDs are equipped with user-friendly features, including voice prompts, visual instructions, and automated analysis algorithms, making them accessible even to individuals without medical training.

One of the most significant advantages of AEDs is their simplicity and ease of use. With minimal training, bystanders can effectively operate an AED to provide timely intervention in cardiac emergencies. A typical AED prompts the user to attach adhesive electrode pads to the patient's chest, analyze the heart rhythm, and deliver a shock if necessary. Studies have shown

that prompt defibrillation within the first few minutes of cardiac arrest significantly increases the chances of survival. AEDs enable bystanders to initiate immediate treatment before the arrival of emergency medical services, bridging the critical gap between collapse and professional intervention.

While AEDs are designed for ease of use, training in basic life support (BLS) and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) remains essential. Education programs aimed at teaching individuals how to recognize

cardiac arrest, perform CPR, and operate an AED can further enhance the chain of survival. By equipping more people with the knowledge and skills needed to respond to cardiac emergencies, communities can create a culture of preparedness and resilience against sudden cardiac arrest.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) represent a monumental advancement in emergency cardiac care, revolutionizing the way we respond to sudden cardiac arrest. With their intuitive design, widespread accessibility, and proven effectiveness in restoring normal heart rhythm, AEDs have become indispensable tools in the fight against cardiovascular mortality. By empowering bystanders to intervene swiftly and decisively in cardiac emergencies, AEDs are saving lives and reshaping the landscape of emergency medical response.





Discover the Refreshing Mango Coconut Smoothie

By Chance Iradukunda

Mango, hailed as the king of fruits, not only delights taste buds with its sweet and tangy flavor but also offers a wealth of health benefits. Originating from tropical regions, mangoes are more than just a delicious treat—they are a powerhouse of essential nutrients and antioxidants that contribute to overall well-being.

Loaded with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, mangoes provide numerous health advantages. They are particularly rich in vitamin C, bolstering immune function and aiding the body's defenses against infections and illnesses. Additionally, their high fiber content promotes digestive health by preventing constipation and fostering a healthy gut microbiome. The beta-carotene found in mangoes supports vision and skin health, potentially reducing the risk of age-related macular degeneration and enhancing skin elasticity.

Despite their sweet flavor, mangoes are relatively low in calories and high in fiber, making them a satisfying snack that helps control appetite and can support weight management goals. Furthermore, the antioxidants and phytochemicals in mangoes exhibit anti-inflammatory properties, which may alleviate symptoms associated with conditions like arthritis and asthma, by reducing inflammation.

Incorporating mangoes into one's diet offers a delicious and nutritious way to enjoy these health benefits while relishing in a tropical indulgence. Whether eaten fresh, blended into smoothies, or added to salads and desserts, mangoes provide versatility in culinary applications while enriching meals with their vibrant flavor and nutritional goodness.

For a refreshing and nourishing treat, consider trying a mango-infused coconut milk smoothie. This creamy and revitalizing smoothie recipe is simple to prepare with just five basic ingredients. Blend fresh mango chunks with coconut milk until smooth, adding a touch of honey or a squeeze of lime for added flavor. This smoothie not only satisfies cravings but also provides a boost of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, making it a perfect choice for a healthy snack or breakfast option.

By embracing mangoes as part of a balanced diet, individuals can enjoy their numerous health benefits while savoring the tropical essence of this beloved fruit. Whether enjoyed alone or as part of a culinary creation, mangoes stand out not only for their taste but also for their impressive nutritional profile and potential to enhance overall well-being.





Swimming isn't just a recreational activity.

By Prince Opoku Dogbey

Swimming is not just a recreational activity; it is also a highly beneficial form of exercise that promotes overall health and well-being. This aquatic activity engages nearly all of the body's major muscle groups, making it an excellent choice for individuals looking to improve their cardiovascular fitness, strength, and endurance.

One of the primary health benefits of swimming lies in its ability to provide a full-body workout without putting excessive stress on the joints. The buoyancy of water supports the body, reducing the impact on bones, joints, and muscles compared to exercises like running or weightlifting. This makes swimming suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels, including those recovering from injury or managing chronic conditions like arthritis.

From a cardiovascular perspective, swimming is an excellent aerobic exercise that can help strengthen the heart and improve lung capacity. As individuals swim, their heart rate increases, which in turn enhances circulation and oxygen delivery throughout the body. Consistent swimming sessions can contribute to better cardiovascular health, reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure.

Moreover, swimming is known to build muscle strength and endurance. Different strokes, such as freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke, and butterfly, target various muscle groups including the core, arms, shoulders, legs, and back. By incorporating these strokes into workouts, swimmers can tone and strengthen muscles while improving overall body coordination and flexibility.



Swimming also offers unique mental health benefits. The rhythmic nature of swimming, combined with the calming effects of being in water, can help reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. Many people find swimming to be a meditative activity that allows them to disconnect from daily stressors and focus on their breathing and movements in the water.

For those looking to manage weight, swimming can be an effective part of a weight loss or weight maintenance program. It burns calories at a significant rate, depending on the intensity and duration of the swim session. Additionally, swimming stimulates the metabolism and promotes lean muscle growth, which can contribute to a more efficient calorie-burning process even outside the pool.

Lastly, swimming is a versatile activity that can be enjoyed in various settings, from indoor pools to natural bodies of water like lakes and oceans. Whether swimming laps for fitness,

participating in water aerobics classes, or simply leisurely swimming with family and friends, this activity offers a refreshing and enjoyable way to stay active while reaping numerous health benefits.

In conclusion, swimming stands out as a low-impact, full-body exercise that supports cardiovascular health, builds strength and endurance, enhances mental well-being, and aids in weight management. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned swimmer, incorporating regular swimming sessions into your routine can contribute to a healthier, more active lifestyle.

“The rhythmic nature of swimming, combined with the calming effects of being in water, can help reduce stress, anxiety, and depression.”



Vaccines are crucial tools in public health, offering protection against a variety of infectious diseases. Their importance extends across several key areas:

1. Disease Prevention: Vaccines prevent diseases that can cause serious illness, complications, and even death. They achieve this by stimulating the immune system to recognize and fight specific pathogens, such as viruses or bacteria, without causing the disease itself.

2. Eradication and Control: Vaccines have played a pivotal role in eradicating diseases like smallpox and in controlling others such as polio, measles, and rubella. Through widespread vaccination programs, these diseases have been significantly reduced or eliminated in many parts of the world, saving countless lives.

3. Herd Immunity: When a large portion of a community is vaccinated, it creates herd immunity. This phenomenon protects individuals who cannot be vaccinated due to age, health conditions, or other reasons, by reducing the spread of contagious diseases within the community.

4. Global Health Security: Vaccines contribute to global health security by preventing the spread of infectious diseases across borders. This is particularly crucial in our

How Vaccines Aid in the Management and Eradication of Diseases.

By Pavel Chamabe

interconnected world where travel and trade can facilitate the rapid spread of pathogens.

5. Cost-Effectiveness: Vaccines are often more cost-effective than treating diseases after they occur. They reduce healthcare costs associated with hospitalizations, long-term disability, and treatment of complications from preventable diseases.

6. Public Confidence in Health Systems: Vaccination programs build trust in healthcare systems by demonstrating their capacity to prevent and control diseases. This trust is essential for promoting broader public health initiatives and responses to health emergencies.

7. Research and Innovation: Continued research and development in vaccines drive innovation in immunology and vaccine technology. New vaccines are being developed to combat emerging infectious diseases and to improve existing vaccines for greater effectiveness and safety.

8. Protection Across the Lifespan: Vaccines are not only for children but also for adults and elderly individuals. They protect people throughout their lives against diseases that can be particularly severe in older age groups.

In conclusion, vaccines are a cornerstone of public health strategy, offering effective and safe protection against a wide range of infectious diseases. Their continued development, distribution, and uptake are essential for maintaining and improving global health outcomes.

Promoting Physical Health in Families.

By Mavis Essaba Mensah



Physical health is the cornerstone of overall well-being, ensuring that every family member can live a vibrant and active life. Implementing strategies to promote physical health not only enhances individual fitness but also strengthens family bonds through shared activities and habits.

Encouraging Physical Activity

Promoting regular physical activity among family members is essential for maintaining good health. Activities such as family walks, bike rides, or playing sports together not only improve cardiovascular fitness but also foster positive relationships.

Children learn healthy habits by observing and participating in physical activities with their parents or guardians. Encouraging outdoor playtime and limiting screen time promotes active lifestyles from a young age.

Emphasizing Nutritious Eating Habits

Healthy eating habits are crucial for sustaining energy levels and preventing chronic diseases. Families can prioritize nutrition by preparing balanced meals that include

a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Involving children in meal planning and preparation instills a sense of responsibility and appreciation for nutritious foods. Avoiding sugary drinks and processed snacks contributes to better overall health and supports healthy growth and development.

Regular Health Check-ups and Preventive Care

Routine health check-ups are vital for detecting and addressing health issues early. Families should schedule regular visits with healthcare providers for vaccinations, screenings, and preventive care. These visits not only monitor physical health but also provide opportunities to discuss any concerns or questions about family members' well-being. Staying informed about recommended vaccinations and preventive measures ensures that everyone receives the necessary care to stay healthy.

Practicing Good Hygiene

Maintaining good hygiene practices is fundamental in preventing illnesses and promoting well-being. Encouraging proper handwashing techniques, especially before meals and after using the restroom, reduces the spread of germs within the family. Teaching children the importance of dental hygiene, such as brushing and flossing daily, establishes lifelong habits that support oral health. Regularly cleaning and disinfecting commonly used surfaces in the home further minimizes the risk of infections.

Conclusion

By prioritizing physical health within the family, individuals not only improve their own well-being but also contribute to a healthier and more cohesive family unit. Creating an environment that supports physical activity, nutritious eating, regular health check-ups, and good hygiene practices sets the foundation for a lifetime of wellness. Investing in these practices ensures that each family member can thrive physically and enjoy a higher quality of life together.

Male Baldness

By Yosua Domedjui

Androgenetic alopecia, often known as male pattern baldness, is primarily caused by heredity. In this instance, androgenic hormones, or male hormones like testosterone, cause the cells in the scalp, hair follicles, and hair fiber to become more sensitive.

This affects many men worldwide. It's a common condition characterized by progressive hair thinning on the scalp.

Causes

Genetics:

Genetics is the primary cause of male baldness. If baldness runs in the family, the likelihood of experiencing it increases. Specific genes make hair follicles sensitive to dihydrotestosterone (DHT), a hormone derived from testosterone.

Hormonal Changes:

DHT plays a crucial role in male pattern baldness. It binds to hair follicle receptors, causing them to shrink over time. This process, known as miniaturization, results in thinner and shorter hair until follicles eventually stop producing hair.

Age:

The risk of hair loss increases with age. Hair growth cycles shorten, and the resting phase of hair (telogen) lengthens, leading to more noticeable hair thinning and loss.





Treatments for Male Baldness

Medications:

Minoxidil: An over-the-counter topical treatment that can help slow hair loss and promote hair growth.

Finasteride: A prescription medication that reduces DHT levels, helping to slow hair loss and sometimes regrow hair.

Hair Transplants:

This surgical procedure involves moving hair follicles from one part of the body (usually the back of the head) to balding areas.

Lifestyle Changes:

Maintaining a healthy diet and reducing stress can help improve overall hair health. While these changes may not stop genetic hair loss, they can contribute to a healthier scalp environment.

Coping Strategies

Hairstyles:

Adopting a new hairstyle, such as a shorter cut, can help make thinning hair less noticeable.

Hairpieces and Wigs:

Modern hairpieces and wigs are natural-looking and can effectively cover bald spots.

Acceptance:

Embracing baldness as a natural part of aging can improve self-esteem and reduce stress related to hair loss.

Conclusion

Male baldness is a common condition with genetic, hormonal, and age-related causes. Various treatments, including medications and hair transplants, can help manage hair loss.

Additionally, adopting coping strategies such as new hairstyles or acceptance can improve quality of life. Understanding and addressing male baldness can lead to better management and a more positive outlook.



Monitoring Your Blood Pressure

By Prince Opoku Dogbey

Maintaining optimal blood pressure is crucial for overall health and well-being. Blood pressure refers to the force of blood against the walls of your arteries as your heart pumps it around your body. It is measured using two numbers: systolic pressure (when the heart beats) and diastolic pressure (when the heart rests between beats). A normal blood pressure reading is typically around 120/80 mm Hg.

Regularly monitoring your blood pressure is essential for several reasons. Firstly, high blood pressure, or hypertension, often dubbed the "silent killer," rarely presents noticeable symptoms but can lead to serious health complications if left untreated. These complications include heart disease, stroke, kidney damage, and vision loss. By monitoring your blood pressure regularly, you can detect any abnormalities early and take steps to manage it effectively.

Monitoring your blood pressure is

particularly important if you have risk factors such as a family history of hypertension, being overweight, lack of physical activity, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, or a diet high in salt and low in potassium. Age also increases the risk, with blood pressure tending to rise as we get older.

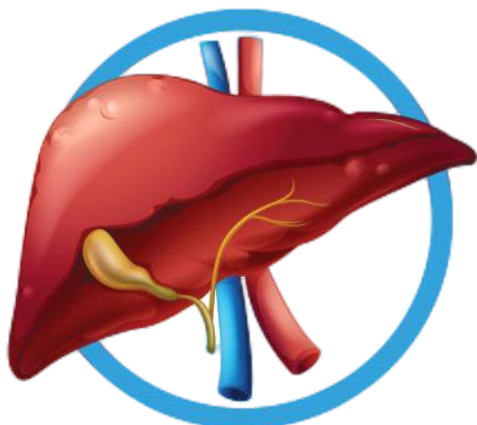
There are several methods for monitoring blood pressure. The most common method is using a digital blood pressure monitor at home. These monitors are easy to use and provide accurate readings. It's recommended to measure your blood pressure at the same time each day, preferably in the morning before eating or taking medications. Keep a record of your readings to track changes over time and share them with your healthcare provider during regular check-ups.

In addition to home monitoring, regular visits to your healthcare provider are important. They can perform periodic checks using more comprehensive equipment and provide guidance on maintaining healthy

blood pressure levels. If your blood pressure readings consistently show high numbers, your doctor may recommend lifestyle changes such as a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products, reducing sodium intake, regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting alcohol consumption, and quitting smoking.

For some individuals, medication may be necessary to manage blood pressure effectively. It's crucial to follow your doctor's advice and take medications as prescribed to prevent complications associated with hypertension.

In conclusion, monitoring your blood pressure regularly is a proactive step towards maintaining good health and preventing cardiovascular diseases. By understanding the importance of blood pressure management and adopting healthy lifestyle habits, you can significantly reduce your risk of hypertension-related complications and enjoy a healthier life.



Impact of Alcohol Consumption

on Your Health

By Chance Iradukunda

Alcohol is a widely consumed beverage across the globe, often associated with social gatherings, celebrations, and relaxation. While moderate alcohol consumption has been linked to certain health benefits, excessive or chronic intake can have detrimental effects on physical and mental well-being.

Moderate alcohol consumption, ranging from one to two drinks per day, may reduce cardiovascular disease risk due to antioxidants in red wine. However, excessive alcohol intake can lead to liver disease, cardiovascular issues, neurological damage, digestive disorders, and increased cancer risk. Mental health issues like depression and anxiety can also occur. One of the major results of abusive intake of alcohol is called AUD (Alcohol Use Disorder)

AUD is a chronic and relapsing condition characterized by compulsive alcohol use, loss of control over drinking behavior, and negative emotional states when not consuming alcohol. Individuals with AUD often continue to drink despite experiencing adverse consequences in various

areas of their lives, including relationships, work, and physical health. AUD can manifest in a spectrum of severity, ranging from mild to severe, and can significantly impair daily functioning and quality of life. Symptoms of AUD may include an inability to limit alcohol intake, cravings, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms when not drinking, neglect of other activities in favor of drinking, and continued alcohol use despite its detrimental effects. Treatment for AUD typically involves a combination of behavioral therapies, support groups, and, in some cases, medication to help individuals manage cravings and maintain sobriety. Early recognition and intervention are crucial for effectively managing AUD and reducing its long-term impact on health and well-being.

Safe drinking guidelines involve moderation, awareness of individual limits, and responsible behavior. Drinking alcohol in moderation, alternating with water or non-alcoholic drinks, avoiding binge drinking, and never drinking and driving are key. Becoming mindful of portion sizes, knowing when to stop, and seeking help are essential for maintaining a balanced lifestyle.





IS SNORING NORMAL?

By Gloria Addo



Snororing refers to rattling, snorting, or grumbling sounds people make during sleep. It happens when there's an obstruction in your airway. Snoring also occurs when airflow is blocked or restricted in the nasopharynx, an area of the upper airway located behind your nose, causing tissues in the airway to flutter and produce sound.

Snoring is common, nearly everyone snores at some point, and 44% of people snore regularly including babies and young children.

But the big question is; 'Is Snoring Normal?'

According to Dr. Dan Jensen, a dentist and owner of Sound Sleep Medical, USA; "While it's true, that snoring is very com-

mon, it's not normal, and snoring often points to a bigger problem. If you snore every night, it's a sign that the air isn't moving freely through your nose and throat, and you're experiencing some amount of obstruction in your breathing pathways.

This blockage causes the tissues around your nose and throat to vibrate, creating a snoring sound. Snoring can also be an early warning sign of other health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease".

Researchers have discovered that snorers are more likely to develop a thickening in the carotid artery, which can result in cardiac issues, even if they do not suffer from a sleep disturbance. The vibrations you experience during the night when you snore can lead to

an inflammation in the arteries, which can then result in a hardening or thickening of the arteries that is associated with several cardiovascular problems.

Dr. Syed Rehman, a board-certified physician and Managing Director of Internal Medicine, USA also explained that while snoring on its own is usually considered harmless, it can be highly disruptive for some people as it indicates a more serious underlying medical condition or sleep disorder called sleep apnea.

Sleep apnea is a condition that causes loud, jarring sounds with paused breathing during sleep. If snoring occurs in combination with apneic episodes (gasping for air in your sleep) and other symptoms like fatigue or irritability, then you should talk to a healthcare provider.



Medical Jargons You Need to Know

Here are four medical jargons and their meanings:

1

Ventricular Fibrillation (Vfib): A type of abnormal heartbeat where the heart's ventricles quiver instead of beating normally, leading to cardiac arrest.

2

Tachycardia: A rapid heart rate, usually above 100 beats per minute, which can be a sign of various conditions, such as anxiety, infection, or heart problems.

3

Hypotension: Low blood pressure, typically below 90/60 mmHg, which can lead to inadequate blood flow to organs and tissues.

4

Bradycardia: A slow heart rate, usually below 60 beats per minute, which can be a sign of conditions like hypothyroidism, medication side effects, or cardiac problems.

These terms can help you better navigate medical conversations and make informed decisions about your health!



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