

OIL PULLING



Why?

Right at the top of your gastro-intestinal tract, your oral microbiota plays its part in your defence against disease. Your oral microbiota is directly linked to what is happening in your nose.

Oil pulling or oil swishing is one example of a good oral hygiene habit to balance the oral flora instead of using harsh mouthwashes. Oil pulling is done by swishing an oil, usually coconut oil, in the mouth for several minutes. Oil pulling gets rid of the bad bacteria without killing the good guys in the mouth and restores balance in the oral flora.

A study done by researchers from the Meenakshi Ammal Dental College in India showed that oil pulling eliminated the bad bacteria just as effectively as a harsh antimicrobial mouthwash. Oil pulling will not, however, kill the protective flora in the mouth, as some harsh mouthwashes do. The Indian study I just mentioned focused on the bacteria involved in plaque, tooth decay and gingivitis (inflammation in the gums). However, oil pulling also has benefits for other mouth-and-gum problems related to an imbalance in the immune system and the microbiota and virome of the mouth, such as mouth ulcers.

How?

Take a tablespoon of cold pressed coconut oil (this should be your first choice if possible), olive oil or sesame oil. Swish it around in your mouth for 5-10 minutes or if you feel brave, up to 20 minutes. It helps to put some music on and keep at it with the oil pulling for 2-3 songs or a piece of music that lasts around 5-10 minutes or longer.

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How? cont...

If your coconut oil is solid at room temperature as it is when temperatures are cooler, it can prove to be quite a texture challenge. A great solution is to melt a larger quantity of coconut oil by putting the container into a warm water bath. It does not need to be too hot. Then decant your coconut oil into smaller bottles or containers so you have about a tablespoon of oil per bottle/container. You can easily get packs of small bottles in either good quality plastic or glass from shops that sell a variety of food storage containers. I sometimes re-use small bottles I have from buying turmeric-ginger shots or wheatgrass shots. Any such bottles can be used.

Then, when you have your coconut oil in a solid state but in a small bottle, you can take one bottle and put it in a cup of warm water until the oil is in a liquid state. Then all you need to do is take the liquid oil, pour it into your mouth and swish away.

You could flavour the oil with essential oils, which could add extra benefits to the oil pulling. However, be sure to dilute the essential oils sufficiently. You need to add a tiny amount of essential oils to a much larger amount of coconut oil. Even a single drop of essential oil can be added to a large quantity of coconut oil. Find out more from someone who knows their way around essential oils if you would like to flavour your oil pulling oil. Essential oils are wonderful and beneficial if used correctly, but can be harmful if used in the wrong way.

When?

The very best time to do oil pulling is first thing in the morning. Before you eat and before you brush your teeth. But, if this is not ideal for you for whatever reason, you will still benefit if you do it later in the day.

Either then do it after breakfast, before brushing your teeth or in the evening before you brush your teeth. If you take a bath you could even pop your bottle/container of oil into the bath to melt it and then do your oil pulling after your bath and before brushing your teeth.

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How often?

Do it daily if you find it easy and not stressful. If you find it hard aim for one to three times per week. You will however achieve more if you do it daily especially if you have specific oral health needs, such as ulcers, inflamed gums, tooth decay, a dry mouth or other oral issues.

If it is more a part of your oral hygiene routine to boost your immune system you should already be achieving a lot with one to three times per week. And then again even more with daily oil pulling.

Start today! Happy oil pulling :-)

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