

Hand hygiene for all

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Global handwashing day: If you think that not washing your hands after leaving the bathroom is disgusting, then you'll probably be surprised at how many people don't wash their hands daily. "Wash your hands before eating dinner!" is something many of us grew up hearing from our parents. We may have grumbled, but we learned from an early age the importance of washing our hands. But what we may not have learned is exactly why hand hygiene is so important. Until Covid-19 happened, handwashing and its importance in helping prevent the spread of diseases is something that most of us probably never gave much thought to. But the global pandemic has really shone a light on the importance of handwashing.

Why handwashing is so important...

- As simple as it may seem, proper handwashing remains the most effective way of removing germs and harmful bacteria from our hands. When washing hands with soap and water, scrub all surfaces for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- People frequently touch their face - eyes, nose, mouth - without even realizing it. Germs can easily enter the body through touching your face, so having clean hands is important!
- Germs living on unwashed hands can get on food and drinks



- while you eat or cook. Some of these germs may multiply in some types of food or drink and make people sick. That is why handwashing is so important, especially during key times such as after using the bathroom, when preparing food, before eating, and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Germs on your unwashed hands can transfer onto surfaces, such as your children's toys, handrails, or doorknobs. We are living through a particularly trying time with the Covid-19 pandemic, and handwashing is more important than ever as we all strive to stay healthy.
- Be sure to wash your hands frequently throughout the day, particularly when you've left home, are handling food, or have been in contact with outside surfaces such as doorknobs, public buses, and hand railings.

- Do keep in mind that the use of gloves does not eliminate the need to wash hands. To protect your health, it is recommended you wash your hands as often as necessary.

- The simple act of washing hands with soap can reduce the incidence of diarrhoea rates among children under five by almost 50 per cent, and respiratory infections by nearly 25 per cent.

Global Handwashing Day: Handwashing is a regular practice that you do every day, but on October 18 you should put just a little more thought to it as it is Global Handwashing Day, a day where good hygiene is encouraged and practiced all around the world by millions of people. Global Handwashing Day (GHD) is an international handwashing promotion campaign to motivate and mobilize people around the world to improve

their handwashing habits. GHD is designed to foster and support a global and local culture of handwashing with soap and shine a spotlight on the state of handwashing around the world. The day increases awareness and understanding about the vital importance of handwashing with soap as an easy, effective, and affordable way to prevent the spread of illness and save lives. This year's theme - 'Hand Hygiene for All' - highlights the elevated importance of handwashing during the Covid-19 pandemic as a method to prevent the spread of the virus. To beat the

History of Global Handwashing Day: This campaign, established by the Global Handwashing Partnership in 2008, was made to help motivate people to improve their handwashing habits. This day was promoted by the UN General Assembly when its first event took place during World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden. World Water Week is a week-long global water conference that addresses the issues of sustainability with water consumption and development. The focus for Global Handwashing Day was school children. This global advo-

national leaders have used Global Handwashing Day to spread awareness about the value of clean hands, built sinks and tippy taps, and have demonstrated the simplicity and value of clean hands. Global Handwashing Day continues to grow. It's endorsed by schools, governments, international institutions, private companies, civil society organisations, and more.

How to Celebrate Global Handwashing Day: As the world marks Global Handwashing Day while fighting the Covid-19 global pandemic, handwashing has never been more important. Keeping up a routine of washing your hands after you eat or leave the bathroom can reduce the risks of diseases more so that vaccines and medications. Washing your hands during this day can also cultivate others to keep their hygiene up. You can also hashtag #globalhandwashingday on social media and look up statistics of how handwashing can easily prevent infectious diseases and share that information with your friends.

This year's theme reminds us that we must work toward universal access and practice of handwashing with soap for now and for a healthy future. Hand washing is such a simple practice, but it really can make all the difference and save lives. Washing your hands thoroughly and frequently will help keep you - and your loved ones - healthier.

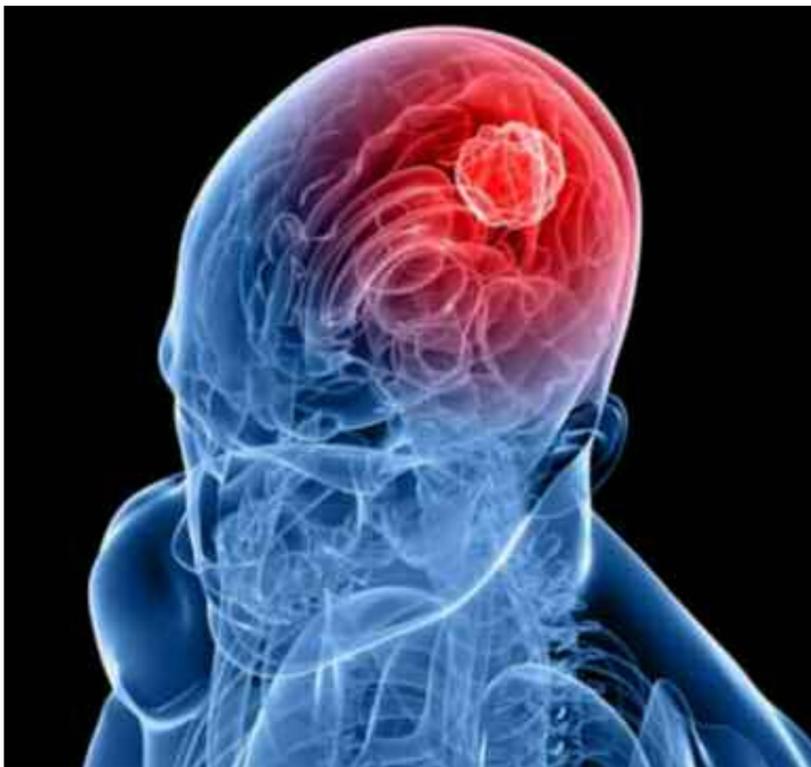


virus today and ensure better health outcomes beyond the pandemic, governments, businesses, donors, institutions, researchers, and individuals alike must make handwashing with soap for all a priority now and in the future.

cacy day successfully reigned in with over 120 million children around the world participating in better hand care in over 70 countries around the world.

Since the first Global Handwashing Day in 2008, community and

An enhanced form of liquid biopsy developed for brain tumors



Gliomas are tumors of glia, central and peripheral nervous system cells that help and protect neurons, which communicate electrical impulses.

Liquid biopsy is a method for detecting cancer by looking for fragments of tumor DNA circulating in the blood. The technique is sensitive at detecting the pres-

ence of some forms of cancer, but brain tumors have until now posed a formidable barrier. The method is challenging when detecting brain tumors as mutant DNA is shed into the bloodstream at a much lower level than any other type of tumor.

Scientists from the Harvard-affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) have developed an enhanced form of liquid

biopsy method to detect and monitor the most common type of adult brain tumors in blood samples. This new blood test is also known as a digital droplet polymerase chain reaction (ddPCR) blood test. When scientists compared blood samples from patients with gliomas with tumor biopsy tissues from the same patients, they found that this ddPCR test could accurately detect and

monitor overtime two mutations of the gene TERT.

The mutations, labeled C228T and C250T, are known to promote cancer growth and are present in more than 60 percent of all gliomas and 80 percent of all high-grade gliomas, the most aggressive and life-threatening type. Leonora Balaj, Massachusetts General Hospital, said, "By 'supercharging' our ddPCR assay with novel technical improvements, we showed for the first time that the most prevalent mutation in malignant gliomas could be detected in blood, opening a new landscape for detection and monitoring of the tumors." Scientists then observed samples of blood plasma matched to patient tumors. They noticed that the method could detect TERT mutations in samples from MGH and similarly checked plasma and tumor samples from other institutions' collaborators. Balaj says, "The test is easy to use, quick, and low cost, and could be performed in most laboratories. Importantly, the test can also be used to follow the course of the disease." Bob S. Carter, the MGH investigator, said, "We envision the future integration of tests like this one into the clinical care of our patients with brain tumors. For example, suppose a patient has a suspected mass on MRI scanning.

In that case, we can take a blood sample before the surgery and assess the presence of the tumor signature in the blood, and then use this signature as a baseline to monitor as the patient later receives treatment, both to gauge the response to the treatment and gain early insight into any potential recurrence." —Agencies



When healthy eating isn't healthy: Letting go of the 'perfect' diet

I stood in front of my fridge, eyeing the vegetable drawer. I was about 6 years old. It was me versus a carton of mushrooms. I remember very clearly thinking to myself, "I don't want to eat that, but I'm going to teach myself to like it."

At that young age, I was already aware of the importance of healthy eating and already semi-obsessed with the idea of mind over matter. Today mushrooms are my favorite vegetable.

I have another memory of my adolescent self sitting at a booth in an Elephant Bar with a few friends from my junior high school dance team. A platter of fried food had just arrived on the table. I struggled against the urge to eat while the other girls dug in. One of my fellow dancers turned to me and said, "Wow, you're so good." I smiled awkwardly with a mixture of pride and embarrassment. "If she only knew," I thought. The desire to be good is something that's driven me since my earliest days. I couldn't understand why no one seemed to agree on what it really took to be good.

I remember taking a Bible off of my parents' bookshelf one day, thinking I might find some answers. I opened it, read a few pages, and quickly understood why everyone was so confused. I had expected a neat list, not allegory.

Later on in my teen years, I decided to become a vegetarian. I had been a staunch adherent of the standard American diet for most of my upbringing, but ethical considerations and my newfound interest in yoga were quickly sweeping me toward change. A year of vegetarianism turned into full-blown veganism. I thought I'd finally found the "right" way to eat. I was tight about my food choices, ready to debate food ethics at a moment's notice, and frankly, pretty self-righteous. I wasn't that fun to hang out with.

Taking 'healthy' too far: I persisted in my veganism after finding out I was iron-deficient, reasoning that government standards for nutrition were likely skewed by the meat and dairy lobbies. This may at least in part Trusted Source be true, but not when it comes to iron Trusted Source. About 3 years into veganism, I accidentally ate a sauce with shrimp in it at a buffet. I had a full-blown panic attack, launching myself into a labyrinth of ethical and gastrointestinal what-ifs. In yoga, I had picked up the idea of eating Sattvic, which translates from Sanskrit as "goodness" or "purity." Unfortunately, my interpretation of this principle wasn't a healthy one. It also didn't help that I was a philosophy major at the time. I was basically Chidi from "The Good Place," the high-strung ethics professor who becomes completely paralyzed whenever he has to make a choice about what appear to be inconsequential things. It wasn't until I started seeking treatment for anxiety, a seemingly unrelated issue, that I realized something was up with my relationship to food. With effective treatment, I felt like the whole world literally opened up to me. It had only been off-limits before because I was so focused on controlling, judging, and assessing everything I did.

Food felt joyful again: Eventually, I went to Europe and decided to be "freegan," or to accept any food I was offered. This was both to be gracious and respectful to my hosts from other cultures, but also to flex my newfound freedom in making conscious, ethical choices without self-torment.

Giving it a name: Not long after, I encountered the word "orthorexia" for the first time. Orthorexia Trusted Source is a term first coined by American physician Steve Bratman in 1997. It comes from the Greek word "orthos," or "right." When I learned this, alarm bells were going off in my head. I saw myself in this word. If I'd never sought out treatment for anxiety, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to step outside of my obsession with making the "right" food choices and see it for what it was. To everyone, including myself, it just looked like I ate really, really healthy. This is how healthy eating can hide an unhealthy pattern.

As the years have worn on, I've loosened up my eating habits quite a bit. After my pregnant body wouldn't have it any other way, I started eating meat again. Eight years later, I've never felt better. I also go out of my way to intentionally bring joy into my food choices with the strategies below.

Feed your inner child: Thanks to pregnancy cravings, I rediscovered foods I hadn't eaten or even thought about since childhood. One of those was fried chicken tenders with honey mustard. Every so often, I intentionally take my inner child on a food date (usually my actual child comes, too). We really make a big deal of it, go all out, and get exactly what we want, not what we should get. For me, it's very often chicken dipped in honey mustard, just like I used to get every time I ate out at a restaurant as a little girl. If I'm feeling fries, I go for those, too. And I enjoy it, in all its deep-fried glory. Ritualizing eating in this way isn't just fun; it can also be healing. By not only giving yourself permission, but actually celebrating the food and your pleasure in it, it's a reminder that we don't have to be perfect and that

Severe morning sickness increases the risk of depression

Many women experience morning sickness (nausea) during pregnancy. This condition is known as hyperemesis gravidarum.

Far more serious than "normal" morning sickness, it is one of the most common reasons for hospitalization during pregnancy and can continue right up until birth. Women are often advised to bed-rest for weeks, suffer dehydration and weight loss, and are often unable to work or care for other children they have.

The condition's psychological effect isn't paid attention to enough by both healthcare professionals and the wider public.

Nearly half of women with HG suffered antenatal depression, and almost 30 percent had postnatal depression, suggests a new study by the Imperial College London and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust. In women without the condition, just six percent experienced antenatal depression, and seven percent suffered postnatal depression. Pregnant women at ≤12 completed weeks gestation recruited consecutively over 2 years. Women with HG were recruited at the admission; controls were recruited from a low-risk antenatal clinic. 106 women were recruited to the case group and 108 to the control. Response rates at antenatal data collection were 87% and 85% in the case and control groups. The women

were assessed for their psychological wellbeing in the first trimester of pregnancy and six weeks after birth. Of the women with HG, 49



percent experienced depression during pregnancy than just six percent in the control group. Just seven percent of the control group had postnatal depression, compared to 29 percent in the HG group. Half of the women with HG were forced to take four or more weeks off work during or after pregnancy. However, the study did not discover any association between HG and maternal-infant bonding, other research has shown that depression can have a negative effect on this bond.

Dr. Mitchell-Jones shared her experience, "I was in and out of the hospital, spent nearly six months in bed - but I was lucky enough to have a supportive employer and family." "Many women can't afford that amount of time off work or are stay-at-home mums with young children to care for. Too often, their partners, relatives, or work colleagues do not provide the support they need because they fail to understand the severity of what these women are going through. We need to educate them, as well as healthcare professionals."

Dr. Mitchell-Jones hopes that her findings can improve understanding of HG and change clinical guidelines on how women with the condition are treated, including a psychological screening and referral to specialist mental health where required. —Agencies