

HYGIENE

SIMPLE PERSONAL HYGIENE

Health is the state/condition of the body of a person who depicts/portrays physical, mental, social and emotional fitness.

Hygiene is defined as the science and practice of maintaining good health. It requires caring of one's own body (personal hygiene) and taking proper care of surroundings (social hygiene).

The major aspects of personal hygiene are as follows:

1. Cleanliness
2. Physical exercise
3. Rest and sleep
4. Healthy habits

1. Cleanliness: Personal cleanliness is most essential.

(i) Hands and skin must be cleaned regularly. We are continually handling a variety of things which may carry germs and be picked up by our fingers and transferred over other parts of the body or into the mouth through food.

- The practice of washing hands with soap after using toilets is very important.
- A daily bath regularly keeps the skin clean and free of germs, the body odours given out in perspiration are removed and keeps the sweat pores open.

(ii) Hair should be kept clean by frequent washing and regular combing. This keeps it healthy and free of parasites (like head-lice).

(iii) Teeth should be cleaned at least twice a day-before going to bed at night and after getting up in the morning.

- Mouth should be washed after every meal.
- Too much eating of sweets and chocolates spoils the teeth causing caries and gum infections.

(iv) Breathe by Nose. One must always breathe by the nose and never by the mouth. One should blow the nose into a handkerchief and should hold a handkerchief in front of the mouth and nose while sneezing.

(v) Eyes must be cleaned and washed with clear water two or three times every day. Trachoma and conjunctivitis are two common diseases of the eye caused through dust and through contamination by hands and towels. For preventing eye infections:

- One must never share towels with others, even in the same family.
- Applying "kajal" through the shared applying sticks may cause infection, so never share such sticks.

(vi) Ears should be kept clean.

- The wax inside may be cleaned by soft moist swab.
- One should never put any sharp pointed object into the ear, it may injure the eardrum.

2. Physical exercise : Some physical exercise is necessary for all age groups, especially children, adolescents and young people. Long gentle walks are enough for the old. It improves blood circulation.

3. Rest and sleep: All organs of the body including the brain (mind) need rest. For adults 6- 7 hours continuous undisturbed sleep is sufficient.

4. Healthy habits: One should develop good healthy habits such as going to bed at night at regular time, taking food at regular hours, etc.

- In general, going to bed at late hours or immediately after taking dinner are not good habits.
- Bowels should be cleared everyday preferably in the mornings.
- Tobacco should be avoided-it is injurious to health and may even lead to cancer.

The living rooms should be well ventilated for fresh air and sunlight. Fresh air brings oxygen and sunlight kills germs.

SOCIAL HYGIENE AND SANITATION

All public places should be kept clean.

The eating places must be kept clean and free of flies. All eatables must be covered.

All utensils must be thoroughly washed preferably with soap and hot water.

All public drains and garbage must be covered and some disinfectants must be frequently sprinkled.

Control of Disease-carriers (Vectors)

Vector is any agent that acts as an intermediate carrier of the pathogen. Many insects and other animals spread diseases.

The Housefly

The housefly is a kind of natural scavenger cleaning and consuming the left-overs of the food, etc. It is called **Public Enemy No. 1**. As it spreads numerous diseases including dysentery, cholera, typhoid, etc.

The manner in which the housefly spreads diseases:

- 1. Hairy body and legs pick up filth:**
- 2. Pouring out saliva:**
- 3. Excreta:**
- 4. Direct transmission of germs**

For example, germs of *trachoma* (a disease of the eyes) are directly transferred when a fly which once settled on the infected eyes of a patient, next time sits on the eyes of a healthy person.

Control of the housefly

There are several methods to control houseflies.

- 1. Elimination of breeding places.**
- 2. Spraying.**
- 3. Avoidance.**

MOSQUITOES AND DISEASES

- 1. *Anopheles mosquito* spreads malaria as it carries *Plasmodium*.**
- 2. *Culex mosquito* spreads elephantiasis caused by a *worm* *Wuchereria*.**
- 3. *Aedes* spreads yellow fever and dengue, both caused by their respective viruses.**

CONTROL OF MOSQUITOES

- 1. Spraying DDT and other insecticides.**
- 2. Elimination of breeding places :**
- 3. Spraying Kerosene or some other greasy oil on stagnant water:**
- 4. Biological control: Certain fishes such as *Gambusia* should be introduced in the ponds as they eat mosquito larvae.**

COCKROACHES

These are very common household insects breeding mostly in the connecting manholes and sewers. Spraying DDT and other insecticides in their breeding places is an effective method of control.

RATS

Rats are serious domestic pests. Rat-flea is a parasite which lives on rat's skin which may carry germs of plague. Rats should be trapped and disposed off or be killed by suitable rat poisons (raticides).

CONTAMINATION OF WATER AND WATER-BORNE DISEASES

Contamination means unwanted entry of disease germs into drinking water or edible foods.

Contamination of potable (drinking) water can occur in several ways such as:

- Sewage leaks into sub soil and may contaminate water supplies.

- People defecating or urinating near lakes, rivers or ponds may contribute to contamination of water.
- Animal wastes and washings from dairies, poultries, etc. may also be drained into water bodies.
- Industrial and farm wastes enter nearby water body.

THE THREE COMMON WATER BORNE DISEASES

1. Cholera

Caused by bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*.

- It causes severe diarrhoea and vomiting. Dehydration follows.
- No urination due to shortage of water in the body, urea accumulates in the blood, which is highly poisonous and causes death.

Infection of cholera occurs through contaminated water and also by dust and flies.

2. Dysentery

There are two forms of dysentery - bacillary and amoebic.

(i) Bacillary dysentery. Caused by *Shigella*. Patients are treated with antibiotics. Prevention includes drinking safe (boiled) water and avoiding flies from contaminating food.

(ii) Amoebic dysentery. Caused by *Entamoeba histolytica*.

- This organism enters our body through contaminated water and food.

3. Hepatitis

There are three types of hepatitis. The name hepatitis refers to liver (hepatos = liver), meaning inflammation of liver. There are three types of hepatitis Hepatitis A is the infectious hepatitis transmitted through contaminated water. The other two types (hepatitis B and hepatitis C) are passed through blood and other body fluids.

Symptoms:

- Body ache
- Eyes yellowish, deep yellow urine (due to bile pigments)
- Enlarged liver

Prevention:

- Hepatitis vaccine
- Proper hygiene
- Avoid taking fat rich substances