

# Oil Pulling - The Best Drugless Therapy

## Abstract

At the dawn of twenty first century it causes doubt, disbelief and astonishment, if one advises to practice a therapy, which cures most diseases. In the past twelve years the curative results of "Oil Pulling" of thousands of people provides proof beyond doubt. It is described as the 'Best Drugless Therapy' a cure for most diseases. Oil pulling or oil swishing, in alternative medicine is a procedure that involves swishing oil in the mouth for oral and systemic health benefits. Oil pulling has been used extensively as a traditional Indian folk remedy for many years to prevent decay, oral malodor, bleeding gums, dryness of the throat, and cracked lips. In addition, this simple method is claimed to cure many diseases ranging from thrombosis, eczema, intestinal infection, and diabetes. The curative property of this preventive daily hygiene measure is a modern marvel in the health of people. The aim of this paper is give an outline about this traditional Indian folk remedy, including the historical background and its role in maintaining the oral health.

## Key Words

Antibacterial activity; detoxification; microorganisms; oil Pulling

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## INTRODUCTION

Infectious diseases have influenced many aspects of human history. In fact, until the 1940's a great part of human evolution appears to be driven by the challenge of surviving in a microbe dominated environment. Microorganisms have been considered different from human, and life has been a constant battle between "them" and "us". But of course, the bacteria that cover most of our body surfaces are not just benign but actually essential to our life on earth. The human mouth contains more than 300 bacterial species.<sup>[1]</sup> In the mouth, however, teeth provide hard, non-shedding surfaces for the development of extensive bacterial deposits. The accumulation and metabolism of bacteria on hard oral surfaces is considered the primary cause of dental caries, gingivitis, periodontitis, peri-implant infections and stomatitis. No matter how sophisticated dental techniques and procedures may have become, preventive dentistry remains the foundation of oral health care. Dental health care professionals need to put home oral hygiene at the core of their advice on preventive practices. Daily plaque removal with a toothbrush is an important component of most oral hygiene programs intended to prevent and treat periodontal diseases.<sup>[2]</sup> Mechanical tooth cleaning

even today remains the most reliable method of controlling supragingival bacterial plaque.<sup>[3]</sup> Failure to comply and lack of technical skill of the patient has lessened the effectiveness of conventional tooth brushing.<sup>[4]</sup> Because traditional mechanical methods for controlling plaque have proven inadequate, research efforts have focused on chemotherapeutic agents for reducing or preventing plaque induced oral diseases. The development of bacterial resistance to presently available antibiotics has necessitated the search for new antibacterial agents.<sup>[5]</sup> Resistant bacteria which are human pathogens may cause disease that are difficult to treat; even if the resistant bacteria are not human pathogens, they may still be dangerous because they can transfer their antibiotic resistance genes to other bacteria that are pathogenic.<sup>[6,7]</sup> The overuse of antibiotics in the treatment of infectious diseases, and the appearance of 'multi-drug resistant' bacterial strains has driven research towards the study of antimicrobial agents from essential oils.<sup>[8,9]</sup> Among the antimicrobial products available today, chlorhexidine gluconate have superior antimicrobial activity. These ingredients has been effective in supragingival plaque control and in reducing gingival inflammation when used in mouth rinses,

gels, or when delivered with irrigation devices. Distinct adverse effects associated with chlorhexidine products have limited their use like brownish staining of teeth and tongue, increased calculus formation, mucosal irritation and altered taste sensation. Oil pulling or oil swishing, in alternative medicine, is a procedure that involves swishing oil in the mouth for oral and systemic health benefits.

### **OIL PULLING THERAPY**

Ayurveda is one of the popular and well accepted modality of complementary and alternative medicine. It is defined as the system of traditional medicine native to Indian subcontinent and practiced in other parts of the world as a form of alternative medicine.<sup>[10]</sup> Oil pulling is an effective biomedical method which involves swishing oil in the mouth. It can achieve outstanding results in the treatment of various conditions, with absolutely no adverse side effects. In Ayurveda this process is said to cure about 30 systemic diseases ranging from headache, migraine to hypertension, diabetes, asthma etc. It basically slows down the ageing process. It may even eliminate the need to undergo surgery or to take certain medication.<sup>[11]</sup> The concept of oil pulling is not new. It has been discussed in the Ayurvedic text “Charaka Samhita” (around 3000 BC) where it is referred to as “kavala graham” or “kavala gandoosha.”<sup>[12,13]</sup> Oil pulling has been used extensively as a traditional Indian folk remedy for many years to prevent decay, oral malodor, bleeding gums, dryness of the throat, and cracked lips and for strengthening teeth, gums, and the jaw.<sup>[14-16]</sup> It is claimed to have advantages over commercial mouthwashes since it causes no staining, has no lingering after taste, causes no allergic reactions and is readily available in the household.<sup>[17]</sup>

### **CONCEPT OF OIL PULLING**

Oil pulling traces its roots to oil gargling practiced in Ayurvedic medicine. Dr. F. Karach, brought “oil gargling” back into the light with extensive research and practice. He proposed about a remarkable treatment at a conference of the All Ukrainian Union of the Oncologists (Specialists for Tumor diseases) and Bacteriologists, a part of the Academy of Sciences of UDSSR during 1991, said: “Sipping and sucking sunflower oil in the mouth is a fantastic biological healing process. Results of healing process cause astonishment and doubts and by practicing, one can see the results in one’s own body and get convinced. It is totally harmless and

simple. Different illnesses could be totally cured without surgery or medicines. This heals cells, tissues and all other organs at once by removing the germs in the mouth that cause destruction of human organism”.

### **OILS USED**

The most wonderful part of oil pulling is that, it can be performed using any oil easily available at homes. Sunflower and sesame seed oils are the most commonly used for oil pulling, but any vegetable oil will work. People have had success with olive, coconut, almond, and other oils. Liquids from milk and water to extracts of Ghooseberries and mangoes have also been used for oil pulling.<sup>[18]</sup> Dr Karach had suggested refined sunflower Oil. In a study conducted by Amith *et al.*,<sup>[11]</sup> oil-pulling therapy with sunflower oil was shown to reduce plaque scores after 45 days. However, the pre- and post-values of bacterial count reduction were not statistically different. Little information regarding antimicrobial properties of sunflower oil exists. Infants treated with sunflower oil are less likely to experience bacterial skin infections than control infants.<sup>[19,20]</sup> This may be the result of skin barrier enhancing effects, or some antimicrobial actions of the oil. Sechi *et al.*,<sup>[21]</sup> and Menendez *et al.*,<sup>[22]</sup> determined antimicrobial activity of Ozonized sunflower oil (oleozon) against *S. aureus*, *E. coli*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Enterococcus faecalis*, *Mycobacterium spp.*, *Streptococcus pyogenes* and *C. albicans*. However, the activity might be due to the powerful oxidant properties of the ozone itself. Sesame oil is obtained from the seeds of the plant *Sesamum indicum* (Pedaliaceae family) largely by pressing methods.<sup>[23]</sup> Sesamol contains high amounts of unsaturated fatty acids and has a potent antioxidant property.<sup>[24]</sup> Linoleic acid and oleic acid are the predominant compositions. High amounts of both sesamin and sesamol have been identified in sesame.<sup>[25]</sup> Both sesamin and sesamol were reported to increase both the hepatic mitochondrial and the peroxisomal fatty acid oxidation rate. Sesame seed consumption appears to increase plasma gamma-tocopherol and enhanced vitamin E activity.<sup>[26]</sup> Coconut oil has a unique role in the diet as an important physically functional food. Besides the health and nutritional benefits, coconut oil has been shown to have anti-carcinogenic effects against colon tumors.<sup>[27]</sup> What make coconut oil different from most other dietary oils are the basic building blocks, or fatty acids, making up the oil. Recognition of the antimicrobial activity of coconut

oil has been reported since 1982 by Hierholzer and Kabara.<sup>[28]</sup> Recently, results from many studies revealed that monolaurin, the monoglycerides of lauric acid from coconut oil had antimicrobial activity against various gram positive and gram negative organisms, including *Escherichia vulneris*, *Enterobacter* species,<sup>[29]</sup> *Helicobacter pylori*,<sup>[30]</sup> *Staphylococcus aureus*,<sup>[31]</sup> *Candida* species including *C. albicans*, *C. glabrata*, *C. tropicalis*, *C. parapsilosis*, *C. stellatoidea* and *C. krusei*<sup>[32]</sup> as well as enveloped viruses.<sup>[33,34]</sup> Thaweboon *et al.*,<sup>[35]</sup> investigated the effect of oil-pulling against oral microorganisms in biofilm models. The results showed that oil-pulling therapy with some edible oils could probably be used as a preventive home therapy to maintain oral hygiene against dental caries.

#### PROCEDURE FOR OIL PULLING

The real important thing of this method is in its simplicity; it is just sipping or sucking oil inside the mouth. It doesn't require dieting, fasting, or consuming unpleasant, and often bowel loosening mixes of herbs and pills, and it is completely harmless. Take one tablespoon of oil in the mouth on an empty stomach in the morning. Do not swallow. With the mouth closed and chin up, without speed or effort, sip, suck, and pull the oil through the teeth for 10 -20 minutes and also exercise the jaw as if chewing. Try to produce as much saliva as possible because mucous traps bacteria, keeping unwanted substances out of the blood. Make sure you don't swallow the oil as it has become toxic. Initially the oil is viscous but slowly it turns thin and white like milk. If the liquid is still yellowish, then you probably haven't pulled and chewed long enough or thoroughly enough. Then it is spit out and mouth is rinsed thoroughly with water for several times. One of the first cleansing symptoms is an increased flow of mucous from throat and sinuses. Mucous drainage is one of the body's methods of removing toxins. While you are pulling, mucous may build in the back of the throat. In that situation expel the oil and clear the mucous from throat before reaching a full 20 minutes. Then take another spoonful of oil and continue for a total of 15-20 minutes. Some may also experience a little nausea and perhaps even need to vomit as the body expels toxic waste. Other symptoms may also arise temporarily. These symptoms will subside as the body becomes cleaner and will become more comfortable with oil pulling. There are several instructions to be followed during the practice of oil

pulling. It is preferably practiced during early morning hours, on empty stomach, after brushing the teeth and cleaning the tongue. It is practiced in sitting position with chin upright. It can be done for a maximum of three times in a day in case of acute diseases. There is no contraindication for the practice of oil pulling except for the children below the age of 5 years due to the dangers of aspiration and swallowing. People with dentures should remove them and practice.

#### HOW OIL PULLING WORKS?

Oil pulling can work its magic almost instantly. After oil pulling the further healing process is done alone by the human organism. In this way it is possible to heal all at once-cells, tissues and all other organs because of the destruction of the natural mouth germs and with this the destruction of the human organism is stopped. The oil acts like a cleanser. When you put it in your mouth and work it around your teeth and gums it "pulls" out bacteria and other debris. It is one of the most remarkable methods of detoxification and healing. Compared to other forms of detoxification it is relatively effortless. The viscosity of the oil inhibits bacterial adhesion and co-aggregation and thereby preventing plaque accumulation. The other possible mechanism might be the saponification or the soap-making process that occurs as a result of the alkali hydrolysis of fat. These soaps are good cleansing agents and might be effective in removing microorganisms or plaque materials. Soaps are good cleansing agents because they are effective emulsifying agents. Emulsification is the process by which insoluble fat like sesame oil is broken down into minute droplets and dispersed in water. Emulsification greatly enhances the surface area of the oil there by increasing its cleansing action. Sufficient scientific research has not been carried out to evaluate the beneficial effect of oil pulling therapy on oral health and these needs to be addressed.

#### CONCLUSION

In spite of all the advances in the field of health science, traditional healing methods still have a major role to play. These methods are born out of native wisdom of very high intellectualism. They are untouched and unspoiled. If they are analyzed on scientific backgrounds they stand the test of time. Countries with a history of traditional medicine should support and integrate traditional medicine into national health systems in combination with national policy. Use of safe,

quality products and practices must be ensured, based on available evidence, and traditional medicine has to be acknowledged as part of primary health care. It is also required to ensure patient safety by upgrading the skills and knowledge of traditional medicine providers. Oil pulling is one such method which improves the oral health and benefits various systems as well. What makes this method so exciting and innovative is that it is extremely simple to practice, no buying of complex products, mixing products like an alchemist or taking zillions of supplements. It doesn't require dieting or fasting. Nearly anyone can do it, regardless of their level of health. If you have any health issues, don't let the simplicity of oil pulling deter you from trying it. Sometimes the simplest procedures produce the greatest results.

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