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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### OIL PULLING FOR MAINTAINING ORAL HYGIENE

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#### ABSTRACT

Oil pulling is a traditional folk remedy practiced in ancient India. It is believed to cure more number of systemic diseases when practiced regularly and as directed. Due to occurrence of side effects to modern medicines and oral hygiene products, people are increasingly attracted towards complementary and traditional practices. Oil pulling is claimed to improve oral hygiene by killing number of microorganisms.

## INTRODUCTION

Oral cavity harbors billions of microorganisms, some of these contribute to development or progression of systemic disease such as CVD, Diabetes mellitus etc. Oil pulling is claimed to improve oral health. It came into lime light and popularity by Dr. F Karach. Oil pulling is an ancient ayurvedic therapy for maintaining oral hygiene. Oil pulling is mentioned in the ayurvedic text Charak Samhita and Sushruta Samhita as 'Kavala Graha or Kavala Gandoosha'. Gandoosha mouth is completely filled with oil such that gargling is impossible where as in Kavala Graha comfortable lesser quantities of oil is used such that gargling is possible.

#### PROCEDURE OF OIL PULLING

- A tablespoon full of oil is swished around the mouth in early morning before breakfast and in empty stomach for 20 minutes.
- In case of children greater than 5 years of age, a teaspoon of oil is used.
- Oil is pulled and forced in between all the teeth by swishing it all around the mouth. If the procedure is done correctly, the viscous oil will become milky white and thinner.
- Then it is spit out and mouth is thoroughly washed with clean warm saline water or tap water and routine tooth brushing is performed.
- If jaw aches, then the procedure can be done just for 5-10 minutes.

- Oil pulling should be ideally performed daily morning on empty stomach before brushing technique and oil not swallowed
- Swallowing of oil during oil pulling should be avoided as oil contains bacteria and toxins.
- Best practiced in sitting position with chin up and can be practiced thrice daily in empty stomach before meals to fasten the healing effects.
- Contradicted for children below 5 years due to risk of aspiration.

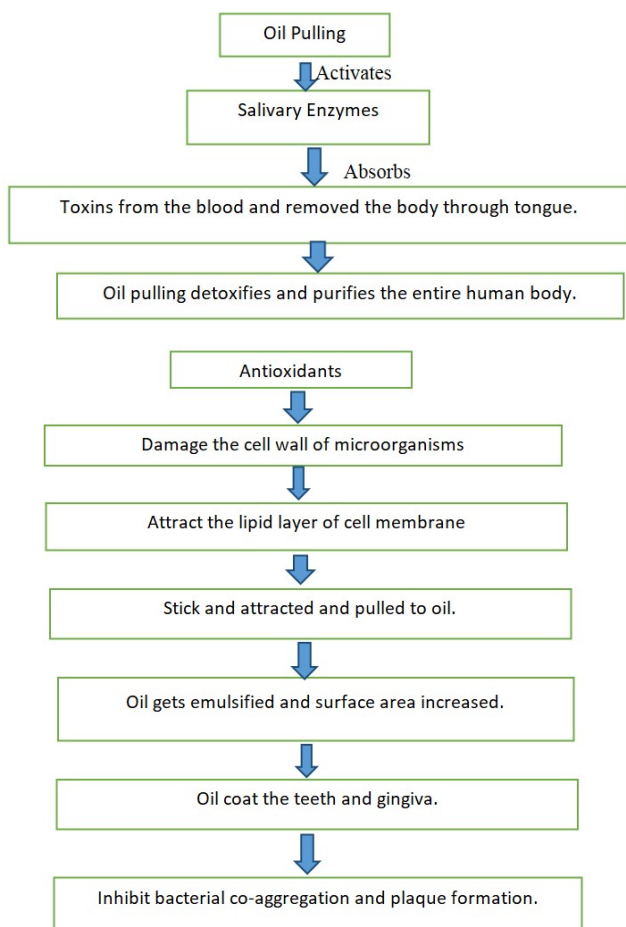
#### MECHANISM AND BENEFITS OF OIL PULLING

Ayurveda hypothesis that tongue is connected to various organs such as kidneys, heart, lungs, Small intestine, spine etc. Oil pulling help in excretion of toxic heavy metals by saliva. Organic oils such as sunflower oil, sesame oil and coconut oil whereas cold pressed though refined oil also works in pulling the bacteria, viruses, protozoa from oral cavity. Oil pulling is performed by cold pressed oils. Sesame oil and sunflower oil has been found to reduce plaque induced gingivitis. Roots of sesame contains (Chlorosesamone) which has antifungal activity. PUFA present in sesame oil reduces the free radical injury occurring in oral cavity.

#### BENEFITS

- Gums become pink, healthier and problem of bleeding gums is solved.
- Resolve dry symptoms or symptoms of dry mouth, throat and chapped lips.

- Teeth become whiter and breath become fresher
- Prevent Dental caries, gingivitis, oral candidiasis and periodontitis from occurring, help to reduce tooth pain, fixes mobile teeth and achieves good oral hygiene.
- Also beneficial in sore throat, dry face, impaired vision, taste loss and anorexia.



**COCONUT OIL:** High saponification index contains lauric acid and alkali (Saliva e.g. NaOH, NaHCO<sub>3</sub>) and form sodium laureate soap like substance which reduces plaque adhesion and accumulation and possesses cleansing action. Lauric acid has antimicrobial, antiinflammatory activity and effective against *S. mutans* and *C. albicans* in invitro biofilm model.

#### PROPERTIES OF COCONUT OIL

1. Anti septic properties.
2. Emollient and moisturizer.
3. No staining
4. No altered taste sensation.

**OLIVE OIL:** 70 % of MUFA with oleic acid as predominant constituent. It also contain plant phenolic compounds, squalen, phytosterols, vitamin A, E and K. These constituents have antimicrobial, Immunomodulatory and antioxidative effect. Oil pulling with olive oil is presumed to prevent oral malodor.

**ALMOND OIL:** Almond oil containing mouth rinse is suggested to result in low gingival scores whereas olive based mouth rinses is believed to inhibit plaque formation and inhibition.

**SESAME OIL:** Contains sesamin, sesamol and sesamol and has detoxification, antioxidant and antibiotic actions. It also prevent lipid peroxidation. Cost of sesame oil is 5-6 times cheaper than chlorohexidine. Monotaurin also in coconut oil is effective against microorganisms such as *Staph. aureus*, *Candida* spp., *Helicobacter pylori*, *E. vulneris* and *Enterobacter* spp. It is hypothesized that monolaurin causes bacterial death by altering bacterial cell wall, penetrating and disrupting cell membrane and inhibiting enzymes related to energy production and nutrient transfer. Monolaurin also has virucidal activity by dissolving lipids and phospholipids in the viral envelope leading to disintegration of virus. Lauric acid in coconut is effective against mouth sores. Sucrose monolaurate of coconut has anticaries properties due to reduction in glycolysis and sucrose oxidation by *S. mutans* and prevent formation of Dental plaque. Oil pulling does not reverse the existing dental caries and regular visits to dentists are required. Oil pulling is also purposed to increase the metabolism of the body, heal the cells, tissues and organs of the body and improve longevity in human beings for a period of 45 days. This leads to improvement in oral hygiene within 2 weeks of practicing correct method of oil pulling. Sunflower oil is observed to decrease both plaque and gingival indices after using it for oil pulling.

**STUDIES DONE ON EFFECT BOF OIL PULLING ON ORAL HYGIENE:** Anand *et al* in their study observed 20% reduction in bacterial count upto 40 days of oil pulling using sesame oil. They mentioned that toxins and bacteria from the body may be removed through the tongue and get trapped in oil. In an invitro study on oral biofilm model, Sesame oil was observed to possess antibacterial activity against *S. mutans*, Sunflower oil had antibacterial activity against *C. albicans* and coconut oil was active against both *S. mutans* and *C. albicans*. Asokan *et al* in their inviro study observed that benefits of sesame oil in an oral health are due to saponification, emulsification and mechanical cleansing action. People allergic to specific oil should use other type of oil compatible with them. This study also claimed to cure several diseases like arthritis, allergies, asthma, migraine, nerve paralysis, kidney and heart disorders.

## CONCLUSION

Oil pulling is one of best procedure. Oil pulling is an alternative medical practice in which an edible oil is swished around the mouth for a period of time and then spat out, similar to mouthwash. It originates from Ayurvedic medicine. Practitioners of oil pulling claim it is capable of improving oral and whole-body health.

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