

# The Healthy Benefits of Oil Pulling

My new morning ritual got a little fresher with oil pulling, another one of nature's way to detox the body.

## What is Oil Pulling?

Oil pulling also known as "kavala" or "gundusha," is an ancient Ayurvedic therapy dating back over 3,000 years and believed to promote oral health and detoxification. The healthy benefits of oil pulling using cold-pressed oils such as coconut oil, sesame, or even olive oil has been reported to "pull" away harmful toxins from the mouth, teeth, gums, and throat. Since oral health reportedly correlates to the health of your body, oil pulling is a safe and effective way to stay healthy.



Oil pulling is a traditional Ayurvedic method of dental care.

## Why I Practice Oil Pulling

The human mouth is home to bacteria, fungi, viruses and other toxins, so the healthy benefits of oil pulling will remove the chance of toxins spreading throughout my body.

Also, studies show good oral hygiene and oral health can improve one's overall health. With oil pulling there is a reduced risk of disease, reductions in stress, fresher (kissable) breath, and whiter teeth.

After a few weeks of oil pulling, I've noticed an increased energy and clarity, another great reason to spend a bit of time swishing oil between my teeth a few minutes a day.

## Which Oil is Better?

It's a matter of taste and choice which oil you prefer. I began oil pulling using organic cold-pressed sesame oil at my first yoga retreat. The scent and taste are palatable and I had a bottle already at home to continue the practice. Others I know use extra virgin cold pressed coconut, sunflower or olive oil.

Sesame oil does have a high concentration of omega-6 oils. Therefore, *coconut oil* may be a better choice for you. Also, coconut oil has anti-fungal properties to kill off bad bacteria in the mouth. Keep in mind, you'll need to let the thick coconut oil warm in the mouth for about 10 seconds before the consistency becomes runny. For some the texture of coconut oil is a turn off. Others find the taste of coconut oil more pleasing than sesame or olive oil. Personally, I'll save the olive oil for cooking.

Depending on what you have in the cupboard (make sure it's still fresh and not rancid), start with the oil of your choice and switch to another one until you find the best one for you.

## How to Oil Pull

1. In the morning, gently brush your tongue using a tongue scraper.
2. On an empty stomach, take one tablespoon of organic cold-pressed oil (coconut, sesame, or olive) in the mouth but do not swallow it.
3. Pull the oil slowly between your teeth sucking and pulling it around your mouth for about 10-15 minutes.
4. The oil will become whiter after around 10 minutes indicating it has been pulled long enough.
5. Spit the oil out of your mouth (in the toilet or sink) and thoroughly rinse your mouth out with water.
6. Brush your teeth as normal.
7. Clean the sink properly to remove the harmful toxins.

Oil pulling does not replace regular dental checkups, flossing, or brushing, so if you have questions consult your doctor or dentist to find out if the oil pulling is for you.

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## The Six Tastes of Ugadi Pachadi

This year on Monday, March 31, Ugadi is celebrated to commemorate the New Year of Andhra Pradesh marking a change in the lunar orbit along with the beginning of the new Hindu lunar calendar. As Mother Nature awakens and spring blooms, the Karnataka Indian New Year festival brings a feeling of joy, growth, prosperity, and new ventures and the six tastes of Ugadi Pachadi.



Wiki Commons Photo: Ugadi Pachadi, by Srinivas14

Ugadi begins early in the morning around 4:30 a.m. when the elderly women of the family chant mantras. The day continues with a ritual oil-bath followed by prayers. Oil bath and eating Neem leaves are also must rituals suggested by scriptures.

As with most Indian holidays, preparation of special foods is

also an important. One of the main items prepared during the festival is *Bevu Bella*, a paste made from jaggery, neem buds, tamarind juice and raw mango.

Bevu Bella is bitter, sweet and sour reminding us that life is a mixture of happy and sad events. During Ugadi, family members eat the special mixture which consists of six tastes called *Ugadi Pachhadi* symbolizing that life is a mixture of unique experiences and that we should remain ready to accept everything in life throughout the New Year.

### **The Six Tastes of Ugadi Pachadi**

Each ingredient denotes the six tastes of life:

- Sadness – Neem Buds/Flowers for its bitterness
- Happiness – Jaggery and ripe banana pieces for sweetness
- Anger – Green Chilli/Pepper for its hot taste
- Fear – Salt for saltiness
- Disgust – Tamarind Juice for its sourness
- Surprise – Unripened Mango for its tang

Are you ready to accept everything in life throughout the New Year? If so, how do you celebrate the season's freshness?