

Health & Fitness



pg 15 Are you tipping the scales? Find out how fit you are by calculating your BMI

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pg 18 Exercise: Got a sinus problem? Don't worry, there are many yoga poses that help



Afternoon Despatch & Courier

MUMBAI | TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2011

Your body may be talking but are you paying attention? Samreen Samad and Henna Achhpal tell you why you should not ignore it and...

LISTEN UP!



Samreen Samad | HRM

It's rare to suddenly wake up with a serious health condition. Unlike machines, our bodies do not shut down at the first sign of trouble. If there is the possibility of a serious health condition developing, our body sends us warning signs in the way of small problems. Understanding these signs and acting before the condition worsens is up to us. We explain a few symptoms that you should not ignore.

BRITTLE NAILS

Causes: A lot of people suffer from brittle nails, especially women. It sounds like a silly thing, but the causes can be deeper. "When brittle nails tend to break easily, usually because they can't hold on to moisture, making the layers of the nail plate dry, leading them to crack. A more severe cause could be an under-active thyroid," says Dr. Mansoor Matcheswala. Even a diet that is low in iron can cause nails to become thin and break easily. Excessive exposure to water, constantly wetting and drying your nails can make brittleness worse.

Treatment: Eating green leafy vegetables, red meat and eggs helps boost iron content. Also B complex vitamins can improve your nails.

HAIR FALL

Causes: The health of your hair reflects your overall health. Hair loss can be an early sign of a disease, so it's important to find the cause and treat it in time. Dermatologist Dr. Maithili Kamat says, "Hair fall which is more than 100 strands a day is considered as significant. Hair fall cases need to be

>> You should pay attention to the signs your body is giving you

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PERSISTENT ACNE

"Persistent acne or acne in adult life could be on account of an underlying hormonal imbalance. Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) is a common condition which causes a hormonal imbalance leading to acne breakouts."

— Dr. Maithil Kamat, Dermatologist



DARK URINE DUE TO DEHYDRATION

"Dark urination may be due to a dehydrated body. Pigments in waste that the kidneys excrete become more concentrated, making your urine dark. It could also be a bladder or kidney infection, renal stones or other kidney problems."

— Dr. Mansoor Matcheswala, Physician

evaluated for hormonal causes such as hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism. A simple blood test will help you diagnose disorders of the thyroid function and if a disorder is diagnosed, one requires an endocrinological consultation." Hair fall can also take place about 3 or 4 months after an illness or major surgery but that is only temporary. Dr. Kamat adds, "Crash diets, fad diets and at times even supervised weight loss diets can also cause acute sudden hair loss. Iron deficiency, vitamin D deficiency contribute to loss of hair as well." Certain medicines taken for high blood pressure or heart problems, birth control pills and anti-depressants can cause hair loss.

Treatment: If you notice hair fall due to the use of certain chemically treated products or medicines, replace them with alternatives. If it's caused by a hormonal imbalance, it can be treated. However, if you don't know the cause, it's best to consult a doctor.

DARK URINE

Causes: Dr. Matcheswala says, "Dark urination may be due to a dehydrated body. Pigments in waste that your kidneys excrete become more concentrated, making your urine dark." Dark urine can also mean you have a urinary tract infection, which could be sending small amounts of blood in your urine which makes it darker. "It could also be a bladder or kidney infection, renal stones or other kidney problems," he adds.

Treatment: Drink plenty of water. If the colour doesn't fade, if you feel pain during urination or frequently need to visit the bathroom then you must visit a doctor.

DRY EYES

Causes: Using the computer or watching television for long hours, excessive intake of alcohol, a cold, dry and windy atmosphere can decrease the moisture or the tear film from your eyes. Anti-depressants, anti-histamines and cold or cough medicines dry out the eyes. In serious conditions, it could be a symptom of hyperthyroidism or an auto-immune disease such as lupus.

Treatment: If the dryness is mild, over the counter eye drops will lubricate and protect your eyes. Wearing UV protected sunglasses in cold and windy weather also helps. Consult a doctor if dryness persists.

SNORING

Causes: Snoring is a common condition and usually goes unchecked. It may not be a serious problem but can be disturbing for people around you. Being overweight or having sinus problems can lead to a swelling that partially blocks your airways, making the tissues at the back of your throat shake, rattle and roll while you sleep. In some cases, it could be obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), in which it's accompanied by pauses in breathing.

Treatment: Try to sleep on your side as the throat tissue



>> Snoring is not serious but it can be quite a hindrance for the people around you

will not collapse in this position. Nasal strips that help widen the nasal passages also help in breathing better.

PERSISTANT ACNE

Causes: Dr. Kamat explains, "Acne is a disorder of the oil glands caused by hormonal stimulation. It is common to have breakouts during puberty because of hormonal changes. However, severe or persistent acne during or beyond adolescent years needs medical attention." She adds, "Persistent acne or acne in adult life could be on account of an underlying hormonal imbalance. Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) is a common condition which causes a hormonal imbalance leading to breakouts. At times, it can be the sole feature of PCOD coupled with features such as weight gain, irregular periods, unwanted hair growth and infertility."

Treatment: There are many natural and medicinal treatments. A change in diet helps reduce acne as well. However, if the it persists and you don't know why, it is best to seek the advice of a professional.

BLEEDING GUMS

Causes: Dental Surgeon Dr. Mukul Dabholkar explains, "When proper dental hygiene is not practiced, bacteria in the mouth can grow forming tartar which causes inflammation of the gums, with swelling and bleeding. A deficiency of vitamin K and A also causes gums to bleed." In most cases, bleeding gums are a sign of conditions such as gingivitis and periodontal disease. However, bleeding gums expose your body to the bacteria that exists in your mouth which can enter the bloodstream and cause a number of health problems.

Treatment: To prevent bleeding gums, it is essential to brush at least twice a day and floss daily. Include vitamin C and calcium in your diet and drink plenty of water which will help wash away any food residue, making it less likely for bacteria to form gum damaging plaque.