

# OIL PULLING

Oil Pulling is the ancient practice of swishing approximately 1 tablespoon of oil -- typically coconut, sesame, or sunflower oil -- in your mouth for about 20 minutes and then spitting it out.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. *What are the benefits of Oil Pulling?***

There is currently insufficient science to support individual claims of the benefits of oil pulling. Oil pulling is not a new practice, it dates back several thousand years. The reported benefits claimed are whiter teeth, cavity and gingivitis prevention, better breath, less sensitive teeth and gums and less plaque and oral bacterial accumulation.

### **2. *How does Oil Pulling work?***

The phrase "oil pulling" comes from the process of the oil being "worked" in the mouth by pulling, pushing, and sucking it through the teeth for at least 20 minutes per day. Consistent high-velocity swishing is thought to "clean" the teeth and the oil acts as a detergent to reduce plaque buildup. Coconut oil can be an organic substitute for mouthwash as it contains Vitamin E, which acts as an antioxidant, and also is reported to have anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties thanks to the lauric acid and monolaurin.

### **3. *What are the risks of Oil Pulling?***

The negative side effects of oil pulling including dry mouth, excessive thirst, muscular stiffness, exhaustion and loss of sensation or taste in the mouth.

Coconut oil is a solid at room temperature and needs to be disposed of in a waste receptacle and not the sink. This oil can clog drains.

Any person with heart attack risk or atheroma present in their vessels confirmed by CIMT (Carotid Intima Thickness Test) or a positive Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring Test should avoid oils that can be used as building blocks of an atheroma.

Oil pulling and its effects are superficial and will not reach deep pockets for anyone with periodontal disease. It is important to understand there is no research supporting its use for a patient with periodontal disease.

### **4. *What else should I consider about the practice of Oil Pulling?***

There is little research available on the effectiveness of these treatments to cure oral or other diseases. Oil pulling does not reverse the effects of tooth decay. Regular oil-pulling routines should not replace routine dental visits or traditional at-home oral care.