



HEALTH TIP: Avocado oil can increase the collagen production, especially the soluble collagen content, in your skin



Okra is a diuretic and helps the body detoxify itself and shed excess water weight



6 HABITS YOUR BODY WILL NOT FORGIVE

From beginning the day with a cup of tea to having fruits following a meal — everyday habits can have adverse effects on the body

Anindita Paul
 mirrorfeedback@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @MumbaiMirror

When it comes to our health, there's always something we wish we had done differently. Yet a large number of people are still bound by poor lifestyle habits and these, in the long run, will leave some sort of an impact on your body.

Binge drinking on weekends

Your weekend benders do much more harm to your body than just a hangover. Binge drinking — consuming more than five drinks in two hours for men and four or more drinks in the same duration of time for women — even occasionally, “is a practice that you should steer clear of,” advises Dr Salah Qureshi, MD-Medicine at AXIS Hospital. Binge drinking can lead to death from alcohol poisoning; inflammation of the pancreas, stomach and liver; and also impair your body's ability to heal from injuries. Further, heavy drinking can cause high blood pressure, irregular heartbeat

or sudden death from heart failure. Finally, even a single binge session can cause dangerously low blood sugar or hypoglycaemia, and pancreatitis in the long term. **DO THIS:** Moderate the amount of alcohol you consume. Stick to no more than two drinks, and don't drink on an empty stomach. Also avoid drinks that are not bought from established stores to minimise the risk of adulteration.

Beginning your day with coffee or tea

The caffeine in tea and coffee triggers the release of cortisol, a hormone that puts your body in a 'stress mode', says Munmun Ganeriwala, nutritionist at Yuktahaar. This is also why these beverages induce feelings of wakefulness and alertness. The truth is your internal systems need some time to begin functioning at full capacity after a night's sleep. Dr Nahid Dave, psychiatrist at Insight Clinic, also points out that caffeine addiction is a known psychiatric diagnosis that most people overlook. “If you depend on caffeinated beverages to stay alert or find yourself gradually increasing the amount of caffeine

you consume, you must take a closer look at your caffeine consumption patterns,” she says.

DO THIS: Begin your day with real food, such as fruits or a handful of nuts or dry fruits such as figs and dates. You can follow this up with tea or coffee after 30 minutes, suggests Ganeriwala. She also advises sticking to a maximum of two cups of tea or coffee, or a combination of both.

All protein, no fibre

“The recent onslaught of fad diets has led to a sudden swell in the amount of proteins being consumed by many, which is encouraging. The downside, however, is that many commonly-available protein powders contain sugar in various formats, so as to blunt the bitterness of protein,” says Dr Muffazal Lakdawala, founder and chief surgeon at Digestive Health Institute. The amount of dietary fibre permitted by many newer diets is far lower than the recommended levels, he says, which can cause a variety of long-term negative repercussions. Fibre has been found to reduce the risk of conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and intestinal

inflammation.

DO THIS: Monitor food labels carefully to make sure you aren't consuming any hidden sugars. Also, eat more whole and unprocessed grains, fruits and vegetables.

Ignoring your dental health and hygiene

Most people don't realise that oral health is intricately connected to the body's overall well-being. A mouth that is suffering from severe tooth decay and periodontal disease will produce bacteria that are likely to enter the bloodstream and result in a variety of other health issues, says Dr Sagar Shah, cosmetic and implant dentist. At the same time, he warns that “brushing too hard wears off the tooth enamel and makes your teeth seem more yellow as the inner layer of dentin is exposed”.

DO THIS: Brush your teeth at least twice a day, preferably after meals. Limit your consumption of sugary and acidic foods and avoid using your teeth for anything other than chewing food. And don't skip your dental appointments

Maintaining poor posture

Sitting is often called the new smoking because of the devastating long-term impact a sedentary lifestyle can have on the body. However, in addition to the number of hours you spend sitting, it's also important to pay attention to how you sit. Faizal Malik, a 38-year-old film professional, realised this after a nasty fall in the bathroom which left him with debilitating pain in his lower back for two days and severe body aches. A medical examination revealed that it was his sedentary lifestyle and overall lack of exercise that contributed to his condition, which was further exacerbated by the long hours he spent sitting in a slouching position.

DO THIS: Maintaining correct posture can play a vital role in keeping your bones and joints aligned, so that the various muscles in your body are used correctly. It also reduces the rate at which your joint surfaces wear out and decreases the stress on the ligaments that hold the joints of your spine together, says Dr Umesh Shetty, senior orthopaedic surgeon at Axis Hospital. Supplement this with a nutritional plan and regular exercise.

Eating fruit after a meal

While fruit is a much healthier alternative to sugary, fatty dessert, replacing your post-meal sweet indulgence with a piece of fruit isn't doing your body any favours, says nutritionist Karishma Chawla. “Your body's glucose levels rise after a meal. Fruits contain a large amount of simple sugars, causing your blood glucose levels to rise even higher. The resultant insulin spike can eventually cause your body's fat percentage to increase. Eating fruit post meals is especially disadvantageous for diabetics, overweight people, those with high lipids, and fitness enthusiasts keen to avoid central fat obesity,” she points out.

DO THIS: The ideal time to eat fruit is in the first half of the day, and preferably on an empty stomach to avoid indigestion.