

HEALTH TIPS



Just one cup of baked sweet potatoes delivers a whopping 438 percent of your daily required vitamin A value



Salmon is rich in protein, vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids which collectively contribute to hair growth

ASK THE SEXPERT

DR MAHINDER WATSA



1 I am 41 years old and married with a nine-year-old son. I am a diabetic and find trouble pulling back my foreskin. I have been wearing my wife's panties. They are a bit tight for me but I am comfortable wearing them. Could this be the reason why I can't pull back my foreskin? Is there a gel or ointment available for my problem?

Your diabetes is the cause of your problem. Visit your doctor for the same and use oil or cream to help slip your foreskin back over the head of the penis.

2 I am 27 years old and have been masturbating for years. When I masturbate, my hand moves very fast. I recently had sex for the first time but I didn't orgasm. It could be because I was very stressed. Even my erection didn't last long. During the second session, it took me 45 minutes to achieve orgasm. What is wrong with me and how can I correct it?

Since you have now had an orgasm and presumably ejaculated, you need no help. But do slow down your speed during masturbation.

3 I am 43 years old and have been faithful to my spouse. I wanted to check if oral sex can make me susceptible to HPV infection?

If the other person has the infection, then it's possible. Why do you ask?

4 I am 22 years old and have been masturbating almost every day for the last four years. Lately, I've noticed that I ejaculate in just 30 seconds. What should I do?

Try to masturbate only when you are sexually excited. Practice the stop and start method of masturbation and do daily Kegel exercises. Check the Internet for more details.

SEND YOUR QUERIES TO: Ask the Sexpert, Mumbai Mirror, Times Of India Building, Dr D N Road, Mumbai 400001 or email at drwatsa@timesgroup.com. Contact Dr Watsa, send an email to mcwatsa@hotmail.com

Kismet Connection

Top selling writer Ashwin Sanghi says you aren't blessed with good fortune, you attract it. Here's how

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Most of you believe luck cannot be controlled. That's probably because you haven't examined the various kinds of luck that play a significant role in our lives. Writer Ashwin Sanghi, in his latest book, *13 Steps to Bloody Good Luck* (published by Westland Ltd.) discusses three varieties as identified by Anthony Tjan, co-author of *Heart, Smarts, Guts, and Luck*, while highlighting the one you can influence and how.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL LUCK:

I tag along with a friend to someone else's dinner party and get introduced to someone. We like each other, get romantically involved and eventually get married. Being at the right place at the right time made it possible. The circumstances made it happen.

CONSTITUTIONAL LUCK:

Age, race, heritage, culture, or upbringing can predispose you to a certain outcome. For example, being promoted in a company because you are from the boss's hometown is constitutional luck.

DUMB LUCK:

The sort of luck where one cannot analyse the cause and effect. Winning the lottery or finding a thousand rupee note on the pavement is simply dumb luck.

While constitutional luck and dumb luck are difficult to control, one can substantially improve the circumstantial luck in one's life. How? Simply by raising the number of opportunities, recognising the valuable ones and responding to the best ones.



We scanned all 13 of Sanghi's tricks to bring you our top 4.

1 NETWORK

'Luck hates loneliness. It's almost impossible to be lucky alone,' says Philippe Gabilliet, Associate Professor in Psychology. It's (six degrees of separation) a theory — formalised by Frigyes Karinthy and popularised via John Guare's play — that everyone and everything is six or fewer steps away. In effect, I could connect to anyone else in the universe in a maximum of six steps through 'friend of a friend' introductions. What it also means is that any job opening, investment opportunity, joint venture, sales opportunity, romantic encounter, loan approval or marriage proposal is simply six degrees away!

Consider the sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar's career to understand how the theory works:

Pandit Ravi Shankar was a music director with All India Radio (or AIR) from 1949 to 1956. V.K. Narayana Menon, director of AIR New Delhi at the time, introduced Shankar to the internationally renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin. Menuhin invited Shankar to perform in America. As a result of his American tours, Shankar became friends with Richard Bock, founder of World Pacific Records. Shankar executed several recordings at Bock's studio. The American rock band The Byrds also used to record at the same studio. They ended up hearing Shankar's music. This led them to incorporate some of Shankar's music into their tracks. The new sounds in The Byrds' music tracks came to the attention of George Harrison of The Beatles. Harrison soon visited India for six weeks to study the sitar under Ravi Shankar in Kashmir. The Beatles went on to use the sitar in the *Norwegian Wood* recording, thus creating a 'raga rock' trend in the west. His association with The Beatles made Pandit Ravi Shankar the most famous Indian musician on the planet by 1966...

Strengthening one's existing network is primarily about investing in relationships. If a friend needs a mutual introduction, do you oblige? If a colleague needs assistance on a project, do you help?...

Cyrus Mistry, the current chairman of the Tata Group, was my classmate at Cathedral School. Cyrus was one of the naughtiest chaps in school, but everyone — teachers and students included — loved him. He could pull the chair away just as you were about to sit down and still offer you a genuinely friendly smile and hand to help you up. We celebrated our twenty-fifth year class reunion some years ago and there was a last-minute hitch with the venue. Cyrus, as usual, was quick to offer his own home as an alternative. It was his way of reaching out to all his school friends and teachers.

That simple gesture is an excellent example of strengthening an existing network...

Growing new networks is mostly about leveraging interactions. If you are seated next to a stranger on a flight, do you introduce yourself and try to strike a conversation?

Ashwin Sanghi

2 GOODNESS

Lucky individuals are not only nice — polite, humble and considerate — but are also intuitively aware of the power of karma. They understand that the greater the positive deeds they put out in the universe, the better the chances of their attracting good luck...

Many years ago when I was struggling to find a publisher, a professor from my alma mater requested my help in writing a speech for him. Though it required a substantial investment of time, I acceded to his request to his great satisfaction. He was very pleased with the result.

A few months later, when my novel began appearing in bookstores, he asked me how sales were doing. I replied that I was happy with sales, but was facing an uphill task regarding publicity. My professor immediately sent me his friend's phone number. 'Give him a call,' he said. 'I'm quite sure he will be able to help you.' I later learnt that his friend was editor of a national newspaper. A couple of weeks later, my first major newspaper interview happened. Good luck? Sure. But some investment of prior effort made it happen. There is one caveat though. Giving with the intention of receiving back negates its very purpose. Motivational speaker Brian Tracy reminds us, 'Always give without remembering and always receive without forgetting.'

3 ALERTNESS

Those who worry create inner disturbance; this mental upheaval does not allow them to take the best of decisions. Remaining calm and relaxed even in trying circumstances is a trait of lucky people... Sometimes, good luck comes in the form of unpleasant experiences. One may call it 'good luck

in disguise'. If we are alert, we are able to see through the disguise... The Persian poet and philosopher Rumi once asked, 'If you are irritated by every rub, how will you be polished?'

Differentiating between hard knocks in life and opportunity's knocks is sometimes difficult. Good luck is all around us, but we are often unable to recognise it because it could appear in disguise and we are not alert to this fact. Before George Bernard Shaw became famous, one of his plays was consistently turned down by a producer. After Shaw achieved success, the producer suddenly cabled an offer to stage the rejected work. Shaw cabled back: 'Better never than late.' The producer had simply not been adequately alert to the fact that Shaw was a rising star... Quite often, people whose very existence depends on opportunity recognition (venture capitalists, for instance), lose out on significant opportunities because they are not adequately alert.

4 POSITIVITY

Mark Murphy, the author of *Hiring For Attitude*, carried out a research project that involved tracking 20,000 newly hired employees. He found that forty-six per cent of them failed within eighteen months. But even more surprising than the failure rate was the fact that when new employees failed, eighty-nine per cent of the time their failure was due to attitudinal reasons; lack of skill was a factor only eleven per cent of the time!.. Keep in mind, though, that a positive attitude is of no use without persistence.. Jamsetji Tata is remembered today as the pioneer who built the Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai and the man who envisioned the steel industry and hydroelectric power for India. But few remember that in 1863, Jamsetji tried establishing an Indian bank in England and brought the Tata firm to the verge of bankruptcy. His honesty and determination won him several friends in England who were happy to appoint him liquidator at a fixed salary. It was this allowance that enabled him to survive. Luckily, the ensuing Abyssinian War resulted in a spike in demand for Indian cotton and Jamsetji went on to acquire a rundown mill in Chinchpokli, thus managing a turnaround in the Tata fortunes.

THE 2-MINUTEREAD

PERMANENT STRESS MAY LEAD TO MENTAL DISORDERS

Permanent stress can activate immune cells that can cause changes in the brain, leading to mental disorders such as schizophrenia, shows a study.

The researchers focused mainly on a certain type of phagocytes, namely microglia. Phagocytes are large white cells that can swallow and digest microbes and other foreign particles.

Under normal circumstances, microglia repair gaps between nerve cells in the brain and stimulate their growth. However, once activated, microglia may damage nerve cells and trigger inflammation processes, the findings showed.

The more frequently microglia get triggered due to stress, the more they are inclined to remain in the destructive mode - a risk factor for mental diseases such as schizophrenia, the study

noted.

However, the researchers noted that not every individual who is under permanent stress will develop a mental disorder.

US researchers demonstrated as far back as the 1950s that children born of mothers who contracted true viral influenza during pregnancy were seven times as likely to suffer schizophrenia later in life.

The new study confirmed this hypothesis in animal models. "The embryo undergoes some kind of immune response which has far-reaching consequences and presumably shapes the future immune system," said Astrid Friebe from Ruhr University Bochum in Germany. The study appeared in the science magazine *Rubin*.

—PTI

Hair: A mirror to your health

Having bad hair days often? Here is when you should be worried

With winter creeping in, our hair is often the first thing to suffer the effects of the cold weather. But if your concerns are more severe than a bit of extra frizz, it could mean something more sinister. Here are a list of symptoms that will manifest on your locks if you suffer from a condition that warrants a visit to the doc.

DRY BRITTLE HAIR

Regular use of hair straighteners and curling irons will naturally affect the quality of your mane. But very often what robs your hair of lustre and shine and results in excessive hairfall is actually dehydration. Hair experts recommend downing an additional two litres of water in a day and avoid alcohol, sugar and caffeine. If this doesn't repair the condition, and hair continues to remain extremely brittle, it could also be a sign of a thyroid problem. A GP or a trichologist would be in a position to recommend tests to verify this. A mild imbalance can be corrected by lifestyle and diet changes and by avoiding stress and eating healthy.

HAIR CARE:

Take a daily supplement rich in vitamin D, minerals, Omega 3 and copper.

DANDRUFF/ SCALY SCALP

Almost every second person suffers from dandruff and pays little note of what could be causing it. While mild dandruff may not be of concern, severe and repeated dandruff could hint at a weak immune system. One should get enough rest and avoid tension and check if it reduces the occurrence. Other conditions such as seborrhoeic dermatitis, psoriasis and eczema can also cause the problem but these will affect other parts of the body too.

HAIR CARE:

Wash your hair with a medicated dandruff shampoo that contains salicylic acid.

HAIR THINNING

Statistics say that 30 percent of women suffer from hair thinning post-menopause. This is said to be a result of hormonal imbalances which can also result in hair loss. The good news is that for 50 percent of women suffering from this condition, this can be corrected through hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Only catch is that hair lost during menopause may not grow back for women for whom



HRT was ineffective. The only permanent treatment, in which case, would be hair transplant.

HAIR CARE:

If you notice hair thinning along with menopausal symptoms, visit a GP and discuss options of HRT.

PREMATURE GREYING

Greying in your 20s can be embarrassing and is mostly genetic. But stress (which uses up the vitamin B), nutritional and hormonal factors can also influence hair colour. In a few cases certain, diabetes and thyroid problems can also cause premature greying. If early greying is accompanied by excessive thirst and extreme fatigue, visit a GP.

HAIR CARE:

Take vitamin B supplements for stress. Avoid smoking or alcohol.

SHORT LAYERS ON TOP

If you've noticed that the length of your hair is shorter on top because of breakage, it's likely that your diet lacks protein. This could also render your locks less resistant to heat and chemicals. Sugary foods can

affect absorption of proteins and must be avoided.

HAIR CARE:

Include a palm-sized portion of proteins to your diet.

BALD SPOTS

Sometimes the way you wear your hair could be reason for your receding hairline. Tying your hair up in a high ponytail by pulling the hair back too tightly could permanently damage the follicles.

HAIR CARE:

Try to spot the signs early and stop whatever was causing it.

RECEDING HAIRLINE

While one associates receding hairline with ageing, chances are, they're usually triggered by lack of diet nutrients. Crash diets and PCOS can also cause this condition among women.

Women who could be suffering from PCOS will also display other signs like facial hair and hair on arms, chest and buttocks.

HAIR CARE:

If you have PCOS, accompanied by symptoms like irregular period and weight gain, consult a GP and a dietician to acquire a more balanced diet.