

Of discoloured skin and fungal infections



**YOUR
HEALTH**

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Q I have multiple itchy discoloured patches in my armpits, groin and waist. What should I do?

This is most commonly caused by a fungal infection (tinea), as these areas are prone to sweating and friction. However, it could also be eczema, contact dermatitis, psoriasis or bacterial infections. Keep the affected areas clean and dry. Wear loose-fitting cotton clothes, change out of sweaty clothes promptly and avoid sharing towels or clothing. Do not use steroid-containing creams. An antifungal cream applied regularly for 2-4 weeks is often effective but do consult a dermatologist.

Rough patches

Q I have a few patches of skin that feel rough. They are not itchy or discoloured. Are these something to worry about?

This is usually harmless. They may be due to dry skin, friction, mild eczema or a build-up of dead skin cells. Apply coconut oil for 10 minutes before a bath. Put 30ml of coconut oil in the bath water. Use a glycerine-based soap or bodywash to bathe. Moisturise with liquid paraffin after bathing and again at night.

Hunchback

Q I am 57 years old and I feel that I am developing a hunchback.

A gradually developing "hunchback" at age 57 may be due to age-related changes in the spine, poor posture, weakening of the back muscles or osteoporosis, all of which may be aggravated by Vitamin D3 deficiency. Check for all these and correct them. In the meantime, try to maintain good posture by standing for 15 minutes against a wall, touching both shoulders to it, and also perform regular weight-bearing and back-strengthening exercises. You can learn these from a physiotherapist or from YouTube videos.

Weaning food

Q Are milk biscuits a good weaning food?

Milk biscuits are not a good weaning food. They are high in refined flour, sugar, saturated trans fats and salt. They contain very little protein, iron, vitamins or other essential nutrients. And they are also a choking risk if the pieces are large. After 180 days, feed the child soft, freshly-prepared foods such as mashed rice and *ragi*. Eventually, fruits and well-cooked vegetables can be added.

Weights

Q I am a 23-year-old woman and I want to exercise with weights. But I am scared that I will bulk up like a bodybuilder.

Women do not develop the large muscles seen in bodybuilders simply by lifting weights. They naturally have lower testosterone levels. This makes it difficult for them to gain excessive muscle mass without specialised training, a very high-calorie diet and, sometimes, performance-enhancing drugs. Continue your strength training as it offers many benefits. It also enhances mental well-being.

Coffee creamer

Q I am lactose intolerant. Can I use dairy creamer in my tea?

There are many types of dairy creamers. They may be made from milk or vegetable oils. If it is made from milk, you cannot use it. Check the label and read the list of ingredients carefully to see if it is "lactose free". Though they contain little or no lactose, they may be high in sugar, unhealthy fats or additives. You can use soya, almond or oat milk instead.

Wrinkled neck

Q I am an engineer who works at a computer all day. It has made my neck abnormally wrinkled.

This is a condition called "tech neck". Position your computer screen at eye level, sit with good posture and take short breaks every 30-60 minutes to stretch your neck and shoulders.

