

Such a pain in the foot



**YOUR
HEALTH**

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Q I have severe pain in my left foot, especially when I wake up in the morning. I can't put weight on it.

The most common cause of such foot pain is plantar fasciitis but other conditions, such as posterior tibial tendinitis, calcaneal (heel) pain, heel bone fracture, altered gait or improper footwear could be contributing factors.

First, apply ice to the foot for about five minutes every 2-3 hours. Take NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) to reduce inflammation and pain. Try this regimen for 7-10 days. Buy and wear shoes with good arch support. If you do not experience any improvement, consult an orthopaedic surgeon for further evaluation and tests.



Loss of appetite

Q I've noticed that my appetite has decreased as I've gotten older. Now, I am now also losing weight.

This loss of appetite may be related to several factors, including:

- Loneliness or emotional changes
- Diminished sense of smell or taste
- Infections
- Side effects of medications

It's essential to consult a physician to rule out any underlying medical conditions that may be causing these symptoms. Also, consider adding a protein supplement to help maintain your nutritional and caloric intake.

Sleep talk

Q I tend to talk in my sleep and it disturbs my wife. Is it normal?

About 60 per cent of children and adults talk in their sleep at some point in their lives. It may be because of stress, sleep apnoea, alcohol, excessive caffeine use or medications.

Reduce your caffeine intake (coffee, tea, caffeinated carbonated cold

drinks). Avoid caffeine for at least six hours before bedtime. Have a regular sleep-wake schedule (go to sleep at the same time and wake up around the same time each day). Aim for seven to nine hours of sleep per night. Exercise regularly, 30-40 minutes of aerobic exercise will do wonders. Meditate to reduce stress levels. Give yourself 30 to 60 minutes of quiet, screen-free time to wind down before bed.

Water intake

Q How much water should I drink?

The requirement varies depending on the climate and level of activity. Men need around 13 cups (250ml each) of total fluids per day and women need less, around 9 cups. Fluids like coffee and juice can also be added towards this total. Watching the colour of your urine is an easy way to keep track. Ideally, it should be light yellow. Dehydration can cause headaches, fatigue, dry mouth and constipation.

Bloody gums

Q My gums are swollen, painful and bleed easily.

Gums ideally should be a light pink colour. Swollen and red gums usually indicate gingivitis, a gum disease. The most typical cause is plaque buildup on the teeth. If ignored, over time you can develop bad breath, gum pain and eventually, loss of teeth. You need to consult a dentist. They will clear the plaque with a procedure called "scaling" and that will relieve symptoms.

Fast pulse

Q My pulse rate is 86 per minute when sitting but if I get up and walk even a few steps, it goes up to 108, and I am uncomfortable.

Your lifestyle may be sedentary, making walking even a few steps a herculean effort. If this symptom is of recent onset, it may be due to excessive use of caffeine, an infection or illness, side effect of medication, anaemia or an overactive thyroid. Record your pulse rate for 30 seconds and multiply it by two. Do this at the same time twice a day, record it and then proceed to consult a physician.

The writer has a family practice at Vellore and is the author of *Staying Healthy in Modern India*. If you have any questions on health issues please write to yourhealthgm@yahoo.co.in