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## Coconut oil pulling reduces gingivitis

By DTI

**KANNUR, India:** A recent study has shown that oil pulling using coconut oil could be an effective method to reduce plaque formation and plaque-induced gingivitis. Coconut oil is an easily usable and safe substance with minimal side-effects and could thus become an alternative to conventional oral antimicrobial agents such as chlorhexidine, the findings suggested.

The pilot study included 60 adolescents aged 16–18 with plaque-induced gingivitis, half of whom performed coconut oil pulling in addition to their oral hygiene routine over the course of 30 days, while the remainder served as a control group. The researchers observed a steady reduction in both plaque and gingival index values already after one week of therapy. In addition, they noted a 50 per cent decrease in these values in four

weeks, which is comparable to the decrease produced by chlorhexidine.

A number of studies have shown that oil pulling or swishing reduces gingivitis. In 2007, for example, oil pulling with sunflower oil was found to reduce plaque and gingival indices after 45 days. However, the current study is the first to investigate the benefits of coconut oil in this respect. To date, the mechanism by which oil pulling works is not fully understood.

According to the researchers, its plaque-decreasing effect could be attributed to mechanical shear forces that can reduce adhesion of plaque. Another possible explanation is the composition of coconut oil. It contains 92 per cent saturated fat, approximately 50 per cent of which is lauric acid, which has proven anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial effects.