

Q & A Mindline



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Q I have been smoking about five cigarettes a day for the past three-four years. Since September 2017, I have noticed recurring painful swollen lymph nodes around my neck region and they hurt more after smoking. I am worried about throat cancer. Please guide and advise.

Smokers are prone to upper airway and chest infections, which can lead to swelling of the lymph nodes (tiny, bean-shaped glands present all over the body). But they are also prone to other infection, cancer and a host of other lung conditions. I am not sure what you are waiting for. When in doubt about a health issue, consult a doctor.

Firstly, I suggest you quit smoking with the help of a nicotine substitute, ideally under professional supervision and support in the form of motivational therapy. Research suggests that the chances of successfully quitting smoking are high with professional input and very low without it.

Also, it would be important to see an ENT specialist at the earliest, for further evaluation and necessary investigation to rule out your fears. In

the meantime, steam inhalation, hot water gargle and a mild analgesic like paracetamol may ease the inflammation and pain in your throat.

Q I need help in adjusting to my newly married life. I had an arranged marriage eight months ago and since then, there has been arguments with my husband and his family. They seem to hate me and so do I. I feel depressed and awful and I'm thinking of breaking this marriage.

I think your 'post-marriage blues' or adjustment reaction to the significant life change (which is more common in arranged marriages) might be taking a toll on your rationality and ability to adapt, which in turn is affecting your ability to form new relationships. But then, it's not easy to move away from your nurtured environment into one that is 'alien' at least in the initial days and months. It's much easier for a man than a woman, therefore, you should be getting that extra support and TLC!

Marriages might be made in heaven, but has to be managed on earth, irrespective of it being arranged, love, or love and then arranged. When it's arranged, you live in an extended family. In this case, patience and acceptance come in handy. I suggest you first strengthen your relationship with your husband before befriending other family members. If he is caring and supportive, then life will get easier. Let go of trivia and 'who said what' and look at the larger picture of a life with your husband and your home.

Be patient, don't react to small things and instead respond in a measured manner after contemplating the issue or comments. Use an emotive tone when you are unhappy for instance -



'it was very hurtful to hear what you said.' This is far more effective than a counter attack, where the core issue is forgotten. Also, commencing with an optimistic tone is a good way to reconcile. You can always start again, as it's never too late. Remember all problems are solvable, provided there is a willing participant.

Q I think consuming alcohol increases one's weight. Is it true? Despite regular exercise, I seem to be putting on weight. Please suggest a way forward.

Indeed. Drinking only a couple of days a week can contribute to weight gain! Alcohol contains as much as seven calories per gram. As a result of this, the alcohol becomes twice as fattening as protein, or carbohydrates and just below the caloric count of fat. Therefore, 60 ml could have about 120 calories.

So, if health and weight gain is an immediate concern, avoid alcohol altogether. Manage your diet and see a dietician for a diet chart you can follow. Seek additional inputs from your gym instructor and set a realistic target you can achieve.

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