

TRADITIONAL ISLAMIC MEDICINE AND REMEDIES.

Description

Muslims turn to the Quran and Sunnah for guidance in all areas of life, including include health and medical matters. The Prophet Muhammad once said that "Allah did not create a disease for which He did not also create a cure." Muslims are therefore encouraged to explore and use both traditional and modern forms of medicine and to have faith that any cure is a gift from Allah.

Traditional medicine in Islam is often referred to as Medicine of the Prophet (al-tibb an-Nabawi). Muslims often explore the Medicine of the Prophet as an alternative to modern therapies, or as a supplement to modern medical treatment. Here are some traditional remedies that are a part of Islamic tradition. One should always consult with a medical professional before attempting any treatment. Some herbs may be harmful in certain conditions or when consumed in the wrong quantities.

I. Black Seed Black caraway or cumin seed (Nigella sativa) is not related to the common kitchen spice. This seed originated in western Asia and is part of the buttercup family. The Prophet Muhammad once advised his followers: Use the black seed, because it contains a cure for every type of ailment except death. Black seed is said to help with digestion, and it also contains antihistamine, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and analgesic properties. Muslims often consume black seed to help with respiratory ailments, digestive issues, and to boost the immune system.

II. Honey: Honey is described as a source of healing in the Quran: *"There comes forth from their [bees'] bellies, a drink of varying color wherein is healing for men. Verily, in this is indeed a sign for people who think"* (Quran 16:69). It is also mentioned as one of the foods of Heaven. *The description of Paradise which the pious have been promised is that in it are rivers of water the taste and smell of which are not changed; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine delicious to those who drink; and rivers of clarified honey, clear and pure...* (Quran 47:15). Honey was mentioned repeatedly by the Prophet as a "healing," a "blessing," and "the best medicine." In modern times, it has been discovered that honey has antibacterial properties as well as other health benefits. Honey is composed of water, simple and complex sugars, minerals, enzymes, amino acids, and several different vitamins known to be conducive to good health.

III. Olive Oil *"And a tree (olive) that springs forth from Mount Sinai that grows oil, and it is a relish for the eaters. (Quran 23:20)."* The Prophet Muhammad also once told his followers: "Eat the olive and anoint (yourselves) with it, for indeed it is from a blessed tree." Olive oil contains monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids, as well as Vitamin E. It is consumed to promote coronary health and is used on the skin to increase softness and elasticity.

IV. Dates **Dates (temar)** are a traditional and popular food for breaking the daily Ramadan fast. Eating dates after fasting helps to maintain blood sugar levels and is an excellent source of dietary fiber, potassium, magnesium, and complex sugars.

V. Zamzam Water Zamzam water comes from an underground spring in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. It is known to contain large amounts of calcium, fluoride, and magnesium, necessary nutrients for good health.

VI. Siwak Twigs of the Arak tree are commonly known as siwak or miswak. It is used as a natural toothbrush, and its oils are often used in modern tubes of toothpaste. Its soft fibers are rubbed gently over the teeth and gums to promote oral hygiene and gum health.

VII. Moderation in Diet. The Prophet Muhammad advised his followers to sustain themselves, but not overeat. He said: "The son of Adam [i.e. human beings] never fills a vessel worse than his stomach. The son of Adam only needs a few bites that would sustain him, but if he insists, one-third should be reserved for his food, another third for his drink, and the last third for his breathing." This general advice is meant to prevent believers from over-stuffing themselves to the detriment of good health.

VIII. Adequate Sleep The benefits of proper sleep cannot be overstated. The Quran describes: *"It is He Who made the night a covering for you, and the sleep a rest, and He made the day to rise up again"* (Quran 25:47, also see 30:23). It was the habit of the early Muslims to sleep directly after Isha prayer, to wake up early with the dawn prayer, and to take short naps during the midday heat. On several occasions, the Prophet Muhammad expressed disapproval of zealous worshippers who gave up on sleep in order to pray all night long. He told one: "Offer prayers and also sleep at night, as your body has a right on you" and told another, "You should pray as long as you feel active, and when you get tired, sleep."