The concept of oil pulling is nothing new. In fact, evidence of this oral therapy dates back over 3,000 years when Ayurvedic practitioners utilized the compounds in oil to protect teeth and prevent a host of oral conditions. In the most fundamental sense, it seems oil pulling is nothing more than a form of mouthwash. As the oil swishes across your gums and teeth, harmful microbes are removed
and captured within the oil. Throughout the past several decades, the scientific community has begun delving into the true effectiveness of coconut oil pulling, and the preliminary findings confirm what alternative medicine practitioners have preached for centuries.

The Potential of Coconut Oil Pulling on Oral Health

Although proponents of this natural oral treatment program list a wide array of potential benefits, research has only confirmed a select few of these supposed benefits. These include:

- **Reduced Concentration of Streptococcus Mutans Bacteria** - This dangerous bacteria is believed to be a significant contributor to overall tooth decay, and it lives primarily in tooth plaque and within saliva. By engaging in coconut oil pulling, researchers believe oil pulling can improve overall oral health by inhibiting the concentration and viability of this bacteria.

- **Reduce Gingivitis Potency** - Gingivitis is a leading cause for a myriad of oral health problems. While the only way to truly eliminate this condition is through regular brushing and dental visits, coconut oil pulling disturbs the environment in which this condition requires to thrive by improving gum health, eliminating aerobic micro-organisms and reducing total plaque count.

- **Eliminate Bad Breath** - There's nothing quite as off-putting as bad breath. While the causes of bad breath can simply be a food you ate earlier in the day, prolonged bad breath is likely the result of bacteria and organisms within your mouth. Coconut oil pulling disrupts the natural cycle of these germs and bacteria, which may effectively reduce or completely eliminate bacteria-caused bad breath.

- **Supports Overall Oral Health** - The mechanical action related to coconut oil pulling is an effective means of sustaining overall oral health as it sustains a clean oral cavity. When combined with regular brushing and dental visits, coconut oil pulling supports overall mouth health by sustaining clean teeth and gums.

How to Use Coconut Oil Pulling

In a fundamental sense, the only instructions for this oral treatment is to place a tablespoon of raw, unfiltered coconut oil in your mouth and simply swish for 20 minutes while making sure not to swallow. However, some find immediately going for a 20 minute swish is difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, gradually make your way to this goal. Begin by swishing for five minutes for the first two days, 10 minutes for the following two days and finally 20 minutes in the following two days. For maximum health potential, strive to swish for a total of 45 minutes.

Have a sensitive gag reflex? Sit in a chair and place your elbows on your knees. While tilting your head forward, swish the oil throughout your mouth. This keeps the oil from reaching the sensitive areas in the back of your tongue, which typically trigger a desire to gag.

*(Image from: Phu Thinh Co)*