

Health Concepts

December 2022

Health promotion to increase health literacy

PREFACE

The definition of health is multidimensional. Not only does it refer to the absence of disease or impairment, but it also refers to a state of balance, an equilibrium that an individual has established within oneself and with the environment. This is what we call wellness. This goes beyond the aspect of curative treatment. We need to focus on health-related quality of life (HRQOL). HRQOL is the degree to which an individual is healthy, comfortable, and able to participate in or enjoy life events. This means that those with a disease or impairment will be considered healthy to a level defined by their ability to establish a balance that makes them comfortable despite the presence of the disease. These changing values to define and promote health need the involvement of all those involved, namely the doctor, patient, and environment.

Wellness requires the commitment of the individual to improve and maintain a good HRQOL. To do so, every person must understand the health risks they face. Not all diseases can be prevented, but knowing your risk factors allows you to make changes that can reduce the likelihood of developing a disease and also provides you with insight that can help you detect the disease earlier, when it is easier to manage or treat. Every individual needs to keep track of the number of health risks that they are burdened with. Everyone must strive to keep their health risk count low by eliminating all the factors that they can control.

Being aware leads to more informed decisions.

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NUTRITIONAL FACTS



SORREL LEAVES or ROSELLE

Pitwaa (Hindi);
Pulicha Keerai (Tamil);
Gongura (Telugu).

The scientific name is *Hibiscus Sabdariffa*. The only variety of leafy vegetable which is consumed without any inhibition during the monsoons is probably sorrel leaves. The Sorrel leaves with its tangy taste come with a rich nutritional value: They are a rich source of iron, vitamins B6, C, A, antioxidants, calcium, zinc, magnesium and phosphorous.

- High Dietary fiber boosts digestive health
- Rich iron content in the leaves help improve red blood cell production and prevents anemia
- High Vitamin C supports the immune function by improving antibodies and white blood cells.
- The powerful antioxidants help reduce free radicals in the body thus protecting damage to cells.
- It reduces liver toxins and fat in the body.
- Has lipid lowering properties and help to prevent cardiovascular diseases.
- Presence of potassium and magnesium helps to lower the blood pressure.
- The leaves help to enhance eye vision as it has a high amount of vitamin A
- Magnesium, phosphorus, and calcium sources in the leaves help maintain bones stronger.

Sorrel leaves if had in moderation rarely cause any side effects. However due to its high amount of oxalic acid, if consumed in excess can cause damages to liver, kidneys and gastrointestinal tract.

MEDICAL UPDATE

Monsoons primarily lead to respiratory problems. Not just people suffering from asthma but also healthy people often experience respiratory difficulties during the monsoon season, the main reason being the high levels of humidity in the atmosphere. Especially when it is overcast, the humidity, along with the higher pollution levels due to suspended particles and several kinds of allergens hanging in the air, makes it literally difficult to breathe.

Most respiratory problems begin with a nasal block forcing you to breathe through your mouth, which could lead to pollutant particles and allergens being introduced into your lungs through the throat.

PREVENTIVE PEARLS

During the monsoon, avoid catching colds.

Avoiding respiratory problems in the monsoon is not difficult. You need to stay warm, keep dry, take a healthy diet, ensure proper hydration with warm drinks like hot tea, soups, broths, and even warm water, exercise regularly, try steam inhalation to keep nostrils clear, and do not forget to gargle daily with warm saline water to keep your throat clear.

Mask up whenever you need to go out.

“To keep the body in good health is a duty ... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.”

- Buddha

Understanding your health risk factors.

A health risk is something that increases your chance of developing a disease or ailment. Your chance of experiencing a health risk is directly related to your exposure to a hazard and your vulnerability to ill health.

Health Risk

= Hazard Exposure x Vulnerability

A health hazard is a potential source of danger to an individual's health. Health hazards can be chemical factors (solvents, adhesives, paints, toxic dusts, etc.), physical factors (noise, radiation, heat, poor ergonomics, etc.), or biological factors (viruses, bacteria, insects, animals, etc.) in our environment that can have adverse health impacts. Psychosocial factors (stress, job demands, lack of support systems, etc.) are also considered health hazards. The most important rule to avoid risk due to these hazards is to avoid or at least minimize exposure to the hazard factor and be aware of your vulnerability to developing ill health.

Vulnerability is the predisposition for an individual's health to be adversely affected. The vulnerability of an individual to hazard exposure can also be taken as the means for handling adverse conditions (coping), the capability to adjust to changes (adaptive capacity), and the degree of consequences (susceptibility). This makes it important for every individual to be aware of his / her health risk factors because understanding the risks can help us take action to avoid or mitigate ill health.

Health risk factors can be broadly understood as non-modifiable or modifiable risk factors. Though every individual has the power to change many factors that put their health at risk, there are some factors that one can't change.

Non- modifiable risk factors

- Age
- Gender
- Family history & Genetics
- Race & ethnicity
- Past history of ailments

Modifiable risk factors

- Personal habits like smoking, alcohol, tobacco chewing
- Lack of physical activity
- Hypertension
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- Type-2 Diabetes
- Unhealthy diet habits
- Sleep habits
- Stress
- Repeated Exposure to hazards

Non-modifiable health risk factors need to be followed up on to postpone the onset of health ailments, while modifiable health risk factors need to be suitably addressed to prevent the onset of health ailments.

Some risk factors, such as age, family history and genetics, race and ethnicity, and gender, cannot be changed. These are not under the individual's control. For example, as we age, our risk of all diseases tends to increase. Gender differences in disease occurrences are present, like men are at greater risk of cardiac ailments while women commonly report anemia. A family history of health conditions and diseases is one of the most significant influencers on your risk of developing them. Existing health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and cancer in your immediate family may point to an increased risk. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in some races, while in others cancer is the predominant cause of death. Even your past history of medical ailments is a non-modifiable health risk factor. While you cannot change these non-modifiable factors, it is important to take note of them and begin taking certain preventive measures.

Modifiable health risk factors need to be controlled. Lifestyle choices are primarily responsible for either a positive or negative impact on the individual's health. The most important among them being habits (smoking, alcohol consumption, tobacco chewing), and physical activity levels. Leading a sedentary lifestyle puts an individual at a higher risk of developing health conditions such as obesity, high cholesterol levels, heart ailments, Type-2 diabetes, stroke, hypertension, osteoporosis, and even certain cancers. To reverse these effects, it is essential that you slowly incorporate exercise and physical activity into your everyday routine. Lack of sleep, an unhealthy diet, and stress are also significant risk factors causing ill-health that can be controlled.

Risk factors are often presented individually, but in practice they do not occur alone. They frequently coexist and interact with each another. Multiple factors can pose a greater risk. So it is imperative to keep track of the number of health risk factors each individual has and set a goal to minimize them for a good quality of life.

Understanding your health risks and discussing them with your primary physician allows you to take preventive steps and also schedule appropriate screening to maximize the likelihood of early detection and disease prevention.

**Know your risk.
Change your habits.**

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