

# Health Concepts

January 2023

## Together, We make a difference

### PREFACE

Healthcare delivery is now moving towards a patient-centric approach; patients are no longer passive participants in the treatment process. Patient involvement and collaboration will be essential for healthcare delivery. For this reason, health awareness is important because it gives people the opportunity to know how to take care of themselves. It also helps people help others by informing them of ways to improve their health. Increased awareness will improve health literacy.

Health literacy is the capacity to seek, understand, and act on health information. Patient treatment does not end with ensuring the lack of symptoms; the wellness paradigm encourages patients to seek a high wellness state through continuity of care. Treatment of any medical condition requires follow-up (continuity of care) to ensure completeness. Health literacy is very important for ensuring this continuity of care. Low health literacy means that physician communication is poorly understood, leading to incomplete self-health management and responsibility and incomplete health care utilization. Patients must thus empower themselves to understand their health risks, know their health numbers, and choose healthy behaviors and make lifestyle changes to reduce the risks of ill-health. If patients are better equipped with easy-to-understand information, it gives them the opportunity to know how to take care of themselves.

The aim of arming patients with basic knowledge about their health risks is to help them recognize risks they can control. Knowledge of your health data allows you to engage in proactive communication with your treating physician in order to plan appropriate health decisions.

**A note of caution: health literacy is not intended to empower the patient to initiate self-care on his own. Proper medical guidance is essential.**

### NUTRITIONAL FACTS



OKRA

*Bhindi* (Hindi);  
*Vendai Kaai* (Tamil);  
*Benḍakāya* (Telugu).

*Abelmoschus Esculentus* or locally known as "lady's finger," is a perennial flowering plant, bears numerous dark green pods measuring about 5-15 cm in length. It takes about 45-60 days to get ready-to-harvest. The pods usually are gathered while they are green, tender, and at the immature stage and eaten as a vegetable. Okra is a nutritious food with many health benefits. It is known to benefit pregnant women, blood sugar control, heart health and even anti-cancer properties.

- Low-calorie and rich sources of dietary fiber, minerals, and vitamins, help in cholesterol controlling and weight reduction.
- Okra contains a thick gel-like substance called mucilage that helps in smooth bowel movement and ease constipation.
- The high level of antioxidants and healthy amount of vitamin A, helps to protect from lung, oral cavity cancers and improves eyesight.
- Good source of folates in okra helps during the pre-conception period to decrease congenital neural tube defects in newborn. Folate is also great for preventing anemia.
- The excellent source of Vitamin C helps in boosting immunity.
- Okra is an excellent source of Vitamin K1 that's helpful for its role in blood clotting.
- Good source of many essential minerals such as iron, calcium, manganese, and magnesium in okra is helpful for bone structure and muscle mass.
- Okra helps in blood glucose control through glycemic control and insulin sensitivity.

Note: Okra may interfere with metformin, a common diabetes medication.

### MEDICAL UPDATE

Just as we thought the pandemic was coming to an end, the surge in COVID-19 cases in China has alarmed people around the world. Some media reports citing government sources suggest COVID-19 cases in India may see a sharp uptick in January 2023 but may not cause severe symptoms or death, citing past trends. The transmissibility of this BF.7 subvariant is very high, and an infected person can further infect 16 people. However, the real question is whether the BF.7 Omicron subvariant will lead to a new wave of coronavirus in India. The number of cases may increase because of the immune escape phenomenon of the variant, but it is hopefully unlikely to cause a wave. While vaccination stands out as the key strategy for prevention, It is of paramount importance to follow COVID-appropriate behavior. If symptoms, like fever and cough, persist beyond 5 days, you must get yourself tested.

### PREVENTIVE PEARLS

COVID prevention-What you can do.

- Vaccinate yourself and family.
- Wear a face mask.
- Avoid crowded places.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects.
- Wash your hands often.
- Stay home when you are sick.

"The doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will instruct his patients in care of the human frame, in diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease."

- Thomas Edison

## Know your health numbers.

Knowledge is power. Understanding your health numbers can help you know where you stand with your health. Knowing these figures can also assist your doctor in assisting you in reducing your risks and improving your health. When you go to the doctor, you hear a lot of numbers being discussed, and many a time you wonder what exactly those numbers mean to you. The key significance of knowing these numbers is that only by knowing and understanding them will you be able to take greater control of your health.

The important numbers to know are blood pressure, blood sugar level, total cholesterol level, and body weight. All these health numbers fall on a continuous scale. It is not enough to say you have a high or low value; we need to know how high or how low your particular number is. Yes, disease prevention is a numbers game that you can very well control. Knowing these key health numbers will help you take steps to bring them within a healthy range.

These four health numbers are crucial to your overall health, especially if you have other non-modifiable health risk factors like age, gender, ethnicity, or a family history of diseases.

Identifying your health numbers is only the first step. Use them to spark conversations with your physician about what each number means to your health.

**Know Your Health Numbers,  
Lower Your Risk.**

### BLOOD PRESSURE (BP)

Blood pressure is the force of your blood against your arteries. It is measured with two numbers: your systolic pressure, or the pressure of the blood against your artery walls when your heart squeezes and pumps out blood, and your diastolic pressure, or the pressure of the blood against your artery walls when your heart rests between beats. While your blood pressure will change throughout the day, it's important to know that:

If your BP is 120/80 most of the time, it is considered normal

If your BP is more than 120/80 but less than 140/90 most of the time, it is considered pre-hypertension

If your BP is usually 140/90 or higher, it is considered hypertension, or high BP.

High BP makes your heart work harder against the resistance and overtime causes it to enlarge or weaken leading to heart failure.

### BLOOD SUGAR LEVEL

Blood sugar level is the amount of glucose in your blood. Normally, the body gets its energy from blood sugar, which comes from food. Blood sugar levels change throughout the day as you eat and digest food. Diabetes is a metabolic disorder in which the level of glucose in the blood is too high.

Blood sugar levels should be Less than 100 mg/dl before eating (Fasting level) and less than 140 mg/dl two hours after eating (post prandial).

Another way to keep track is Your HbA1C level (Glycosylated hemoglobin level), a test that looks for hemoglobin with sugar attached to it. This test helps you and your doctor understand your long-term control of blood sugar level.

Normal range for HbA1c is 4.0-5.6%.

### TOTAL CHOLESTEROL LEVEL

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that's found in all the cells in your body. Your body needs some cholesterol to build cell walls, and synthesize hormones, vitamin D, and substances that help you digest foods.

Total cholesterol level to be less than 200 mg/dl.

Having too much cholesterol in your blood cause plaque to build up in your blood vessels (atherosclerosis) and hardening of the arteries. Over time, this can make your blood vessels narrow, or even totally blocked, leading to a heart attack or stroke.

### BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)

Your BMI is a weight-height calculation that can help determine if you're overweight or obese.

Body Mass Index BMI  
Weight in Kg / Height in m<sup>2</sup>

Normal - BMI 18.5 to 24.9

Overweight - BMI over 25

Obese - BMI over 30

Waist size is yet another way to measure this risk. To measure your waist, wrap a tape measure around your waist just above your hip bones.

For men waist size less than 94cm is low risk and for women below 80cm is low risk.

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