# Health Concepts

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## *Practise responsible self-medication.*

### PREFACE

Self-medication is a common phenomenon in developed and developing countries alike. Self-medication is becoming increasingly important as it moves patients towards greater independence in making decisions about the management of minor illnesses, thereby promoting empowerment. However, it may be problematic with risks such as misdiagnosis, improper drug dosage, prolonged duration of use, drug interactions, and polypharmacy.

During the pandemic, the growing influence of social media, accessibility of over-the-counter medications, and fear of contracting the virus have led to self-medication practises among the general public. This trend has continued into post pandemic times as well.

Self-medication with prescription drugs, especially antibiotics, is a cause for concern. Commonly cited reasons for self-medicating with antibiotics are the use of leftovers from prescribed courses, past experience with the prescribed use of antibiotics, faster relief from illness with antibiotic use, and influence by social media.

Using antibiotics during self-medication is the leading cause of antimicrobial resistance, so their intake must be regulated.

Patient education and regulation of the sale of prescription drugs by pharmacies will be the keys to responsible self-medication.

Responsible self-medication refers to the use of OTC (over-the-counter) medicines without a physician's prescription, either on an individual's own initiative or following the advice of a healthcare professional.

Maximising benefit and minimising risk.

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### NUTRITIONAL FACTS

**करी पत्ता (Hindi)**
**கறிவேப்பிலை (Tamil)**
**కరివేపాకు (Telugu)**

### CURRY LEAF

The curry leaf tree (Murraya koenigii or Bergera koenigii) belongs to the family Rutaceae. The plant is native India and has long been used in Indian cuisine as a leafy vegetable, condiment and spice. It's aromatic leaves make it ideal to strengthen flavor in cooking. Both fresh and dried leaves are used for both medicinal and culinary applications. Curry leaves are rich in protective plant substances, such as alkaloids, glycosides, and phenolic compounds, which give this fragrant herb potent health benefits. Also, vitamin A & C, beta-carotene as well as significant quantities of iron, phosphorous, vitamin B, calcium, fiber and carbohydrate are present.

- Protects the body- Curry leaves are packed with antioxidants that may protect your body by reducing oxidative stress and scavenging free radicals.
- Reduces risk of heart diseases- Research shows that consuming curry leaves may benefit heart health by reducing high cholesterol and triglycerides levels.
- Neuroprotective properties- Curry leaf extract reduces the amount of oxidative damage in brain cells, as well as enzymes associated with neurodegenerative disease progression
- Reduce the risk of cancer- Curry leaves have anti-mutagenic potential. They protect our bodies from different types of cancers.
- Helps in Diabetes management- Curry leaves are rich in fiber which slows down digestion, thus preventing sudden spikes in blood sugar levels in our blood. They also boost the activity of insulin, further helping patients with diabetes.
- Effective against morning sickness - Morning sickness and nausea in pregnant women can be effectively controlled with the consumption of curry leaf tea.
- Pain reliever- Curry leaves were found to be useful in relieving pain and used traditionally as an analgesic (pain reliever).
- Treatment of iron deficiency anemia- Curry leaves are rich in iron and folic acid which is important in improving iron levels in the body.
- Aids digestion- Curry leaves have mild laxative properties that help heal constipation and indigestion problems.
- Excellent for our hair- They strengthen our hair and prevent hair loss. They are also helpful in preventing dandruff and dry scalp.

### MEDICAL UPDATE

Vaccination is the administration of a vaccine into the human body. The vaccine consists of weakened, live, or inactive forms of a disease-causing virus or microorganism. After entering our body, vaccines act like a weak disease-causing pathogen, and our body initiates a response to fight against this infection. The infection-like state caused by the vaccine never causes illness, but it activates our immune system to produce antibodies and other protective cells like T and B lymphocytes.

Once this imitative infection effect wears off, the remaining protector cells help fight against future infections. It will take a few weeks for our bodies to produce these disease-fighting lymphocytes after vaccination.

Vaccines boost our immune system by developing immunity against pathogens. Vaccines protect us from many life-threatening diseases and, at the very least, decrease the severity of the disease. It also reduces the risk of infection transmission from one person to another.

### PREVENTIVE PEARLS

The greatest benefit of vaccination and booster dosing is for high-risk populations, including older adults, persons with co-morbidities and, immune compromised persons.

"When diet is wrong, medicine is of no use. When diet is correct, medicine is of no need."

– Ayurveda proverb.

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## Antibiotics: when do we need to take them?

There are several medical conditions that make people particularly vulnerable to infection. This makes antibiotic prophylaxis necessary.
Antibiotics are medicines that fight infections caused by bacteria by either killing the bacteria or making it difficult for the bacteria to grow and multiply. Viruses are different from bacteria.

**Antibiotics aren't effective against viral infections.**

Antibiotics are important to treat infections and have saved countless lives. However, anytime antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects and contribute to antibiotic resistance, one of the most urgent threats to the public's health.
Common side effects range from minor to very severe health problems. If you need antibiotics, the benefits usually have to outweigh the risks of side effects and antibiotic resistance.

| MINOR SIDE EFFECTS OF ANTIBIOTIC USAGE |
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| Rash |
| Nausea |
| Diarrhoea |
| Yeast infections |

| SEVERE SIDE EFFECTS OF ANTIBIOTIC USAGE |
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| *C. diff* infection, which causes diarrhoea that can lead to severe colon damage. |
| Severe and life-threatening allergic reactions. |
| Antibiotic-resistant infections. |

There are many different types of antibiotics. Mostly, they can be grouped as penicillins, cephalosporins, macrolides, aminoglycosides, tetracyclines and fluroquinolones. They can be broad-spectrum (used to treat a wide range of infections) or specific (for particular infections).

| WHEN ARE ANTIBIOTICS PRESCRIBED ? |
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| Infections are unlikely to clear up without antibiotics. |
| Could infect others unless treated |
| Infections carry a risk of more serious complications |
| Recommended for people who are more vulnerable to infection. |
| As prophylaxis for surgery, bites or wounds, recurring infections to avoid higher risk of infections. |

Physicians prescribe antibiotic dosing depending on various factors such as age, gender, body weight, severity of infection, specific medical conditions, pregnancy, lactation, kidney function, liver function, drug interactions, drug bioavailability, mode of action of the drug, etc. There is a rationale for choosing and prescribing the particular antibiotic for the possible diagnosis.

Dosing Regimens Matter. The appropriate duration of therapy needs to be weighed against the patient's physiological status, the virulence of the pathogen, and the clinical consequences of the infection.

Take antibiotics as instructed by your physician. Never self-medicate with antibiotics. Never take antibiotics, thinking you will recover faster.

**Antibiotics aren't always the answer when you're sick.**

Most antibiotics do not cause problems if they're used properly, and serious side effects are rare. Compliance with antibiotic drug dosing is critical for early recovery from illness.

| USING ANTIBIOTICS |
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| Take them exactly as your doctor prescribed. |
| Do not save them for later. |
| Do not take antibiotics prescribed for someone else. |
| Do not share your antibiotics with others. |

**Smart use of antibiotics is the best care.**

Bacteria are germs. They live in the environment and all over the inside and outside of our bodies. Most bacteria are harmless and even helpful to people, but only some can cause infections. We need to be aware of the need and purpose of using the appropriate drug for the specific infection.

**Take antibiotics ONLY if you need them and ONLY under the direction of your physician.**

**Never self medicate with antibiotics. It can do more harm than good.**

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