

Health Concepts

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Let self-diagnosis be plain and simple.

PREFACE

Self-diagnosis is the process of diagnosing or identifying a medical condition within yourself. Majority of the time, people browse the internet for a symptom or medical sign and try to figure out if they have a condition; this is called self-diagnosis. Not only is self-diagnosis bad, but it can also be dangerous. If you jump to conclusions about the condition you're suffering from, you may begin wrongful treatment or even mislead your physician due to a bias in your symptom or medical sign reporting. The way the internet search engines are designed in terms of keywords and algorithms is that they often provide information on some of the most serious ailments, showcasing these ailments first (for example, a brain tumor for a headache symptom).

On the other hand, physicians use medical algorithms (or "decision trees") in establishing a diagnosis based on personalized patient information obtained from the clinical history, examination, previous medical history, and the most appropriate (i.e., necessary) laboratory tests. Such algorithms are advantageous because they are logical and sequential and maximize a clinician's efficiency in decision making and initiating further treatment.

"A correct diagnosis is three-fourths the remedy."

.. Mahatma Gandhi

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NUTRITIONAL FACTS

केले का फूल (Hindi)
வாழைப்பூ (Tamil)
అరటి పువ్వు (Telugu)



BANANA FLOWER

Banana belongs to a family **Musaceae**. Banana flower is also known as Banana Blossom or Banana Heart. While it may seem like a tedious process to clean and prepare, the benefits are nonetheless worth noting. They can be eaten raw or cooked and are used primarily in salads, curries or soups. Banana flowers are a nutrient-dense food product with 19.60% protein, 70% fiber, 53.78% carbohydrates and numerous minerals including potassium, calcium, copper, phosphorus, iron, magnesium and vitamins A, C & E.

- **Controls infection**- The extract in banana flower has ethanol which prevents the growth of pathogenic bacteria.
- **Averts Non communicable diseases**- The antioxidants neutralize free radicals and prevent oxidative damage thereby reducing the risk of heart diseases and cancer.
- **Controls diabetes**- Banana flower extracts promote glucose uptake, and help reduce blood sugar levels.
- **Natural antidepressants**- Magnesium in banana flower acts as a mood elevator reducing anxiety.
- **Improves menstrual wellness**- These flowers when cooked, increase the progesterone hormone in the body, thereby reducing the menstrual bleeding and help deal with pain.
- **Improves lactation**- This galactagogues vegetable, increases the breast milk secretion for the lactating mothers.
- **Promotes kidney function** - Works as a natural remedy for dissolving kidney stones, averting the risk of inflammation and urinary problems. Especially helpful in treating prostate enlargement.
- **Slows the ageing process**- Vitamin C and antioxidants, help to reduce stress on cells and slow down the ageing process.
- **Combats iron deficiency anemia**- The richness of iron in banana flowers can remarkably pump iron stores.
- **Aids digestion**- Being an alkaline food which effectively neutralizes the stomach acid secretions and its high dietary fiber content help regularise bowel functions and also helps in weight loss.
- **Supports bone health**- Significant potassium, calcium, vitamins A, C, and E and powerful flavonoids in the banana flower help preventing chances of osteoporosis.

MEDICAL UPDATE

We are experiencing an extended period of influenza like respiratory infections after COVID subsided last year. Respiratory tract infections due to a variety of viruses like influenza, rhinovirus, adenovirus H3N2 and H1N1 are on the rise among all age groups. In fact, government authorities have reported a steady rise of COVID19 cases over the past few weeks. The increase in infections can be directly attributed to the lack of safety precautions (not wearing a mask, not following social distancing, and participating in huge gatherings) being followed by the public.

Though symptoms are generally mild and most patients are being treated as outpatients, infectivity is high and more people are getting affected. Do consult your local physician in case the symptoms prolong.

PREVENTIVE PEARLS

- Wear a face mask.
- Follow social distancing.
- Maintain personal hygiene.
- Stay at home when sick.
- Rehydrate adequately.
- Take good rest.

Take a FLU Vaccine this season. You will need to take a booster once in a year.

"In the field of observation, chance favours only the prepared mind."

-- Louis Pasteur.

Understanding your laboratory test results

Clinical laboratory test results are a very important parameter in diagnosis, monitoring, and screening. 70-80% of diagnostic decisions are based on laboratory results. Laboratory tests provide healthcare professionals with vital information to assist in making important clinical decisions regarding your health. Some tests are part of a routine checkup. Some to help diagnose your medical ailment or even monitor treatment efficacy. Not all medical conditions have signs and symptoms in the early stages of the disease (for example, elevated cholesterol levels).

REASONS TO DO LAB TESTS

Check your overall health.

Help diagnose your symptoms.

Diagnose medical conditions that do not have symptoms

Monitor the effectiveness of treatment.

The selection of the diagnostic laboratory parameters depends greatly on the medical problem in question. Ordering too many tests in an uncritical manner will not necessarily provide you with more information, and it can sometimes make it even more difficult to interpret the results.

Diagnosis is an uncertain art considering all the variability in human characteristics. This is particularly true in the early phases of diagnostic evaluations. As physicians evaluate patients, they keep a set of diagnostic hypotheses in mind, each of which is assigned a relative probability, such as "very likely," "possible," or "unlikely."

These relative probabilities are further evaluated depending on information gained through patient history, physical examination, and diagnostic tests. With appropriate information, one diagnostic possibility becomes the "diagnosis" and evidence for the physician to stop further investigations and proceed with the targeted treatment protocol.

Individuals often ask for laboratory tests based on their own research or on the advice of friends or family. Sometimes even because a lab is offering a concession on test packages. This situation at times provides the "perfect storm" of clinical uncertainty and needs to be avoided.

Ordering tests without a clinical reason makes the results difficult to interpret.

Laboratory test results reported as numbers are not meaningful by themselves. Their meaning comes from comparison with reference values and all the other information your clinician has gathered about your health, including the results of a physical examination, your health and family history, lifestyle, and any medications you are taking.

The reference range for a given test is based on the results that are seen in 95% of the healthy population. But not everyone is typical. Sometimes patients whose test results are outside the reference range may be healthy, and some patients whose test results are within the reference range may have a health problem. If your results fall outside the reference range or if you have symptoms despite a normal result, you will likely need more testing.

A normal result does not promise health.

The reference range for a test may be different for different groups of people depending on their age, gender, health status, etc.

Variability in your test results can be alarming, but some variability between labs and within your own results over time is expected. It is recommended that you follow up with a health care provider if you notice significant, unexplained changes in your test results, especially if there is a significant magnitude of change in comparison to your earlier results, as this could signal a change in your health status.

We need to question whether reference ranges prescribed by Western, European, and other Asia-Pacific countries are applicable to our Indian population. The reference intervals have to be locally modified and meaningfully interpreted according to the biological variation, e.g. age, gender, health status, ethnicity, dietary habits, lifestyle, and testing methodology used.

END NOTE

Laboratory data is never a substitute for a good clinical examination and patient history. Clinicians treat the patient, not the laboratory results.

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