

**This Simple Activity
May Help Reduce
Lower Back Pain**

**Study: This
Common Sweetener
Linked to Higher
Risk of Stroke, Heart
Attack**

AUGUST 1st issue 2024

Health newsletter for Sri Lankans globally

Health & Views

**What Causes Parkinson's
Disease? 5 Risk Factors You
Need to Know**

**Get These Foods Out
of Your Fridge Now**

**Daily
Multivitamin
s May Not
Help You
Live
Longer,
Study
Shows**

Compiled and edited by Dr Harold Gunatillake OAM



Healthy foods can be harmful if you eat too much

Soy

©Shutterstock

Soy is a popular food, especially among vegans and vegetarians. It's a great plant-based source of protein, and its isoflavones are known to help fight several age-related diseases.



Healthy foods can be harmful if you eat too much

©Shutterstock

We have written about 'healthy' foods that are just junk food in disguise, but in this gallery, we are talking about foods that are generally good for you. We're all familiar with the concept that too much of anything is bad for you, and healthy foods are no exception. Indeed, there are serious detrimental effects to the excessive, chronic consumption of some foods that are otherwise pretty healthy.

Click through and confirm if you're consuming too much of these foods.



Healthy foods can be harmful if you eat too much

Cruciferous vegetables

©Shutterstock

We've all heard about the benefits of eating cruciferous vegetables. They're rich in fibre, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and DNA-protecting enzymes called glucosinolates.



Cruciferous vegetables

©Shutterstock

But they also contain goitrogens, which are substances that disrupt the production of thyroid hormones. Excess consumption of goitrogens may lead to thyroid disorders. Brussels sprouts, kale, and collard greens are among the worst offenders. Boiling cruciferous vegetables, however, will greatly reduce the amount of goitrogens.



Tea

©Shutterstock

Tea is not only comforting and delicious, but it also boasts a number of benefits. Most types of tea contain antioxidants, and green tea for instance is rich in the anti-inflammatory compound EGCG.

**10 Foods and Beverages
That Can Dehydrate You**

**The Scientific Reason
Bananas Are the
Perfect Nighttime**

h Ωϱ! N. b Ŷ ŷ - OŶ o - ! Ŷϣ ρή Ŷγ ŨŶ o AŶθ ήγ Oθ! oŶ Ũ! I ŨŶ

By Prof. Raphael Nyarkotey Obu



Okra or commonly known as lady's finger is a widely consumed vegetable in tropical regions. Especially in Ghanaian kitchen okra is one of the most versatile foods, which are loved and consumed by all. It is biologically categorized as a fruit but is generally consumed as a vegetable. For men, there are assertions that men who eat too much of it could affect their waist BUT no studies confirm this. However, okra presents much good news for men and women from a scientific perspective and I examine it in this article. Rich in nutrients

Okra boasts an impressive nutrient profile.

The US Department of Agriculture reports that one cup (100 grams) of raw okra contains:

Calories: 33

Carbs: 7 grams

Protein: 2 grams

Fat: 0 grams

Fiber: 3 grams

Magnesium: 14 percent of the Daily Value (DV)

Folate: 15 percent of the DV

Vitamin A: 14 percent of the DV

Vitamin C: 26 percent of the DV

Vitamin K: 26 percent of the DV

Vitamin B6: 14 percent of the DV

Two studies (Carr and Maggini, 2017; DiNicolantonio et al. 2015) found that okra is a good source of vitamins C and K1. Vitamin C is a water-soluble nutrient that aids holistic immune function, and vitamin K1 is a fat-soluble vitamin that's known for its role in blood clotting.

Moreover, okra is low in calories and carbs and contains some protein and fiber. Numerous fruits and vegetables lack protein, which makes okra somewhat unique. Eating enough protein is linked with weight management, blood sugar control, bone structure, and muscle mass (Pasiakos SM, 2015; Devries and Phillips, 2015).

Antioxidants

Okra is loaded with numerous antioxidants. One study (Xia et al. 2015) found that the primary antioxidants in okra are polyphenols, including flavonoids and isoquercetin, as well as vitamins A and C.

Tressera-Rimbau et al. (2017) note that a diet high in polyphenols may improve heart health by lowering the risk of blood clots and oxidative damage. It may also support brain health as it can penetrate the brain and protect against inflammation (Sarubbo et al. 2018), enhance symptoms of ageing and improve cognition, learning, and memory. Decreases heart disease risk

The thick-gel nature of okra, called mucilage, plays a vital role as it binds cholesterol during digestion, which triggers it to get rid of the body with the stool instead of maintaining it in the body.

For instance, Wang et al. (2014) conducted an 8-week duration randomly separated mice into three groups and gave them a high-fat diet containing 1 per cent or 2 per cent okra powder or a high-fat diet without okra powder. It was found that the mice on the okra diet got rid of extra cholesterol in their stools and had decreased total blood cholesterol levels than the control group.

Lectin

Okra also contains polyphenols. For instance, Medina-Remón et al. (2017) conducted a 4-year study on 1,100 people and found that those who ate a diet rich in polyphenols had reduced inflammatory markers linked with heart disease

Okra also contains a protein called lectin, which may inhibit the growth of human cancer cells. These properties have been reported to demonstrate potential in many cancer cells which are adumbrated:

The first study report: Okra kills 72 percent of human breast cancer cells in vitro

This study was conducted by Monte et al. (2014) and found that the lectin in common okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*) was shown to kill up to 72 percent of human breast cancer cells (MCF7) in vitro, primarily by inducing programmed cell death (apoptosis). The okra lectin was found to reduce the growth of breast cancer cells by 63 per cent. In this study, the lectin is found in okra seeds, and researchers in this study got their lectin by water extraction from okra seed meal. This anti-cancer lectin was found in 2012 and contained anti-inflammatory and anti-nociceptive (pain relieving) properties, making it an exciting compound for future research.

The authors found that the lectin compound has a "potential therapeutic effect on combating human breast cancer." Apart from the seeds, other parts of okra also have demonstrated anti-cancer properties, namely pectin.

Okra water

Drinking "okra water" is a popular new method of using okra. Some have even suggested that drinking it helps lessen diabetes symptoms. The drink is made by putting okra pods in water and soaking them overnight. Some valuable nutrients in the skin and seed pods will be absorbed into the water. If you're not crazy about the taste of okra, drinking this okra water solution is a quick and straightforward way to derive the benefits of okra without eating it.

Some prefer to cut the okra into thin slices instead of soaking the pods whole. If you prepare okra water this way, prepare for a slightly bitter drink. Continued next page

It may lower blood sugar



Fan et al. (2013) mice study found that eating okra or okra extract could decrease blood sugar levels.

In one previous study, rats were prescribed liquid sugar and purified okra and had smaller blood sugar spikes than animals in the control group (Khatun et al. 2011). They further held that okra reduced sugar intake in the digestive tract, thus causing a stable blood sugar response. Apart from that, okra could interfere with metformin, a common diabetes medication. Therefore, eating okra is not recommended for those taking this drug.

A previous study also found that okra water improved the blood sugar levels of pregnant rats that had gestational diabetes (Tian et al. 2015). Also, roasted okra seeds, have been studied and proven to have a positive effect on lowering blood sugar (Thanakosai and Phuwapraisirisan, 2013).

The second study reports: Okra pectin inhibits 75percent of highly metastatic melanoma cells in vitro.

This study was conducted by (Sengkhampan et al. 2009) and found that okra pectin is found just under the skin of the pods, and it contains special compounds (highly branched rhamnogalacturonans). This is unique as it has never before been found in other pectins. Commentators believed that it is one of the recent compounds that are responsible for the effectiveness of pectin against melanoma.

In another study by Vayssade et al. (2010), pectin inhibited the proliferation of highly metastatic mouse melanoma cells (B16F10) by 75percent after 48 hours of treatment and also increased the rate of programmed cell death (apoptosis) by nearly 23-fold. They further discovered that the pectin triggered apoptosis by interacting with Galectin-3. This is akin to the mechanism that exists with the well-known compound Modified Citrus Pectin, however, okra pectin does not have to be modified in any way to have this effect.

Unexpected Signs of Chronic Inflammation

Finally: Men who eat okra (Southern diet) have 40percent less prostate cancer

The two studies above clearly show that two different components of okra (pectin and lectin) have potent anticancer properties; therefore, as usual, we are probably better off consuming the entire edible portion of okra if we want to maximise its anticancer benefits. Have any actual benefits been observed in human populations?

One study (Tseng et al. 2004) conducted in the United States found that men eating a Southern dietary pattern (eating okra, grits, cornbread, beans, rice, and sweet potatoes) had 40 per cent less prostate cancer than those who do not.

Some academic commentators believe that, although the result bordered on statistical significance, this was a fair-sized study that followed nearly 3,800 men for ten years. The surprising thing about this study is that, apart from okra, beans, and sweet potatoes, the Southern eating pattern was not a very healthy diet, and contained high portions of red meat and bacon known to increase cancer risk.

Furthermore, the Southern eating pattern protected men from prostate cancer much more than a vegetable and fruit-rich diet, even though it contained 24 per cent less fruit and vegetables (29 servings weekly on the Southern diet vs. 38 servings weekly on the fruit & vegetable-rich diet). Research now says okra could protect us from at least three cancers.

Stress management

Doreddula et al. (2014) found that the seed extracts of okra have an antioxidant and anti-stress effect in the bloodstream of mice. Managing stress levels is an essential part of managing diabetes. Long-term, high stress levels can cause blood sugar levels to spike.

Okra, pregnant women

Okra is a good source of folate, with 1 cup (100 grams) providing 15 per cent of a woman's daily needs for this nutrient. Folate (vitamin B9) is an essential nutrient for pregnant women. It helps lower the risk of a neural tube defect, which affects the brain and spine of a developing fetus (16 Trusted Source). It's recommended that all women of childbearing age consume 400 mcg of folate daily.

The Most Stressed Cities In America 2024

Modern society seems to be set up to promote stress, it is everywhere and virtually impossible to avoid. Some stress is pretty much inevitable these days to some degree from family and relationship struggles to health and money to environment and politics.

These recent years have elevated stress levels with imposed restrictions, heightened inflation, and increasing homicide rates.

[Read the full story](#)

3 Gentle Exercises Cardiologists Recommend for a Healthier Heart

[Aerobic exercise is called "cardio" for a reason—but heart doctors say it's not the only way to make your heart strong!](#)

[Read More >](#)

['Staying Regular' Is Good for Good Health](#)

[Many People on Statins May Not Need Them](#)

Can We Predict How Fast Cognitive Decline Occurs With Early Alzheimer's Disease?

A new study published in the medical journal [Neurology](#) investigated predicting how quickly those with early Alzheimer's disease (AD) could experience cognitive decline, and how new drugs that were recently approved for AD may help to reduce the decline.

[Read the full story](#)

How Too Much Sugar Harms Your Body

[Diabetes and mood problems are just two possible outcomes from a long list of unpleasant side effects.](#)

[Read More](#)

Loneliness Increases Risk Of Memory Loss

According to a study recently published in the [Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics](#) from the University of Waterloo, about one-third of Canadians feel lonely and this can have a greater impact on memory than social isolation which both represent a significant risk to the aging population.

[Read the full story](#)

Warning Signs of Liver Problems

[By the time a liver disease shows symptoms, it could already be advanced. Here are the signs to look for -- and to act on right away -- to help avoid liver failure.](#)

[Read More](#)

12 Dangers of Sitting All Day

Too much sitting wrecks your back and raises your risk of anxiety, dementia, and other serious health problems. See what you can do to counter these effects.

[Read More](#)

15 Foods That Are Healthier Than You Think

Think red meat, chocolate, and French brie are guilty pleasures? This will make you give these eats and others a second chance.

[Read More](#)

Attention Coffee Lovers

What to know before you grab your favorite cup of joe.

- [Drinking Your Coffee This Way Might Be Best for Weight Management](#)
- [How Much Coffee Should You Drink Per Day?](#)
- [6 Foods to Avoid While Drinking Coffee—According to a Dietitian](#)

Sore Throat vs. Strep Throat

Your throat aches and burns. It's painful to swallow. You know something is wrong, but how bad... [Read more...](#)

10 Foods That Battle Bloating

Feeling bloated? Check out these 10 foods that offer extra vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and compounds to ease the air in your abdomen.



[MNT RESOURCE](#)

How does it work? Targeted therapy for lung cancer

What are targeted therapies for lung cancer, such as ALK and MET therapy? In this article, learn about the possible side effects and how these medications work.

[READ ON](#) →

[READ MORE](#)

3 Key Symptoms of Parkinson's

Parkinson's disease is a fairly common age-related and progressive disease of brain cells that affect... [Read more...](#)

What to Expect With Heart Medication

Sometimes diet and exercise are not enough and cholesterol-lowering medications may be needed. [Read more...](#)

ARTICLE

Does Vitamin D Help With Pain Relief?

Though vitamin D can be synthesized in the skin when it is exposed to the sun, the absorption is erratic and depends on... [Read more...](#)

Please share with friends