

IN THE PINK OF HEALTH

THE PINK PAGE

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PUT YOUR HEART AT EASE. EJECTION FRACTION: THE HEART HEALTH INDICATOR

Heart disease can happen to anyone, even if you lead a relatively healthy lifestyle. Therefore, it's best to stay prepared, always. Fortunately, there is a simple way to know whether you're at risk or not, and if yes, how good or bad the condition is.

Ejection Fraction, or EF, is a measure of the amount of blood the heart pumps out each time it contracts and is a sound indicator of the heart's health. It is especially useful for people with a history of heart problems.

Why it's important

Your EF gives the doctor a clearer picture of your heart condition and helps him or her prescribe the correct mode of treatment to minimise risk of heart failure.

An EF test is recommended when a patient is first diagnosed with a heart condition and again towards the end of a treatment cycle to assess how well the heart is responding. A low EF may be a sign of irregular heartbeats, in which case you will be put under close monitoring until your condition improves.

Measuring EF

The EF measure is always expressed in percentage. There are various methods to measure EF like echocardiogram, ultrasound, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and Computerized Tomography (CT scan).

While doctors consider an EF range of 50–55% as normal with no cause for alarm, readings lower than this need closer medical attention.

Though EF decreases with weak/damaged heart, muscles/valves or high blood pressure, it can also reduce or increase depending on the therapies prescribed.

If you belong to the following categories, get your EF checked.

- Those who have suffered from angina and/or heart attack
- Diabetics
- Those with a history of hypertension
- Smokers
- Heavy drinkers

Enhancing your EF

Maintaining a healthy EF range requires just some simple lifestyle changes. Regular exercise is, by far, the best way to have a healthy heart. Reducing the amount of salt in the diet is another way. This reduces fluid build-up and keeps the blood pressure in check. Managing fluid intake and drinking only prescribed fluids are also said to help. Eating a heart-healthy diet comprising whole grains, lentils, fresh fruits and vegetables can further improve EF. Another important change that can contribute immensely to your heart's health in the long run is stopping tobacco usage and reduction in alcohol consumption..

A HEARTY RECIPE

Avocados are known to keep the heart healthy. Popularly known as 'alligator pears', they are not only a rich source of disease-fighting anti-oxidants, but are also rich in Mono-unsaturated Fatty Acids (MUFA) - the good cholesterol enhancer in the body that keeps the heart healthy. Read on for a simple, tasty recipe using avocados..

Avocado Dip

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup thick, home-made hung curd
- 2 teaspoons chopped onion
- 1/2 teaspoon of any hot sauce
- 1 ripe avocado, peeled, pitted and mashed

Method

Blend the mashed avocado and curd in the blender. Combine this with the onion and hot sauce. Chill for an hour and serve with whole wheat crackers or besan chillas. A perfect afternoon snack for hot summers, it can also be served with diced carrots, radish, or cucumber.



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