

My individual-level experience with intermittent fasting: a case study from holistic point of view

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1. Introduction

From the middle of February 2024, I have started taking food twice only in a day. I have adopted this habit of taking food and it is continuing till date. In the morning, I take food in between 9.30 am and 10 am. At evening, I take in between 7.30 pm and 8 pm. When I travel, the timing slightly changes. So, approximately, I maintain gaps of 10 and 14 hours in between two meals during daytime and night respectively. Such an eating habit or plan is commonly known as ‘Intermittent Fasting’¹. Popular literature on it is widely available online. One may [Google](#) it for better understanding. There are many physical benefits, which may follow with the practice of this food habit. However, honestly, I did not intend to reap any physical benefit from it at the time of adopting it. Even, I did not know about its physical benefits. [Google](#) knows only that, for the first time, I performed a search with the term ‘intermittent fasting’ sometime in the last month, when I planned to write a blog post on the subject matter. My main motivation behind adopting this food habit has been the ‘Solar Flare’² and its possible impact on us. This was one of the most widely discussed issues in recent past. Throughout 2022 and 2023, I watched series of videos and / or gone through online lectures/sessions (through YouTube) on spirituality focusing changes in level of consciousness – yuga parivartana – solar flare etc. On 10 March 2024, in a blog post, I wrote: “Nowadays, I take food twice only. Once in the morning – in between 9-10 am, and for the second time, in between 8-9 at evening. ... For the rest of the day and/or night, I breath air and drink water, I am fine. I am well aware that solar flare is going on with its peak in mid-2024. On the spiritual side, I hope that my present lifestyle will help me to align my body-mind-spirit with the extra energy that is coming

¹ <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/intermittent-fasting-what-is-it-and-how-does-it-work>.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_flare.

down from the Sun³.” When I face any direct question on my present food habit from people around me, simply I say that – as extra (divine) energy is coming from the Sun, we should eat less. Also, we should utilise this extra energy for good.

2. My physical details and the ideal body weight and BMI

Before proceeding to the practical details, let me brief my physical status considering my age, height and weight etc. In 2024, I am a 53 years old man. My height is 164 cms (approx.). My average weight, till the middle of February 2024, has been 72 kgs. Let me share a fact that after completing MA in Economics, I travelled a lot by train during 1997-2000 in connection with my further education and research (in Population Studies and Health Economics) in different parts of the Country. I used to measure my weight in the weigh-machines with one rupee coin, which were available at the railway stations. Still, I remember that my average weight used to vary between 56 and 57 kgs. Gradually, I became obese in past 24 years or so with a rapid increase in the past five years. As a student of Population Studies, I learnt about ideal height and weight for people, healthy range of Body Mass Index (BMI) etc. from the perspective of public health. However, there are many online portals or calculators^{4, 5} available today, which may guide us to determine ideal body weight with respect to particular height, age and gender. I am presenting two screenshots in regard to my ideal weight below.

The screenshot displays the 'Ideal Weight Calculator' interface on Calculator.net. The page has a dark blue header with the site logo and navigation tabs for 'FINANCIAL' and 'FITNESS & HEALTH'. Below the header, the breadcrumb trail reads 'home / fitness & health / ideal weight calculator'. The main heading is 'Ideal Weight Calculator'. A descriptive paragraph explains that the calculator computes ideal body weight (IBW) ranges based on height, gender, and age, comparing several popular formulas. The input section includes three tabs: 'US Units', 'Metric Units', and 'Other Units'. Under 'Metric Units', the 'Age' field is set to 53 (with a range of ages 2 - 80), 'Gender' is set to 'male' (with radio buttons for 'male' and 'female'), and 'Height' is set to 164 cm. There are 'Calculate' and 'Clear' buttons. The 'Result' section, highlighted in green, states 'The ideal weight based on popular formulas:' and contains a table with the following data:

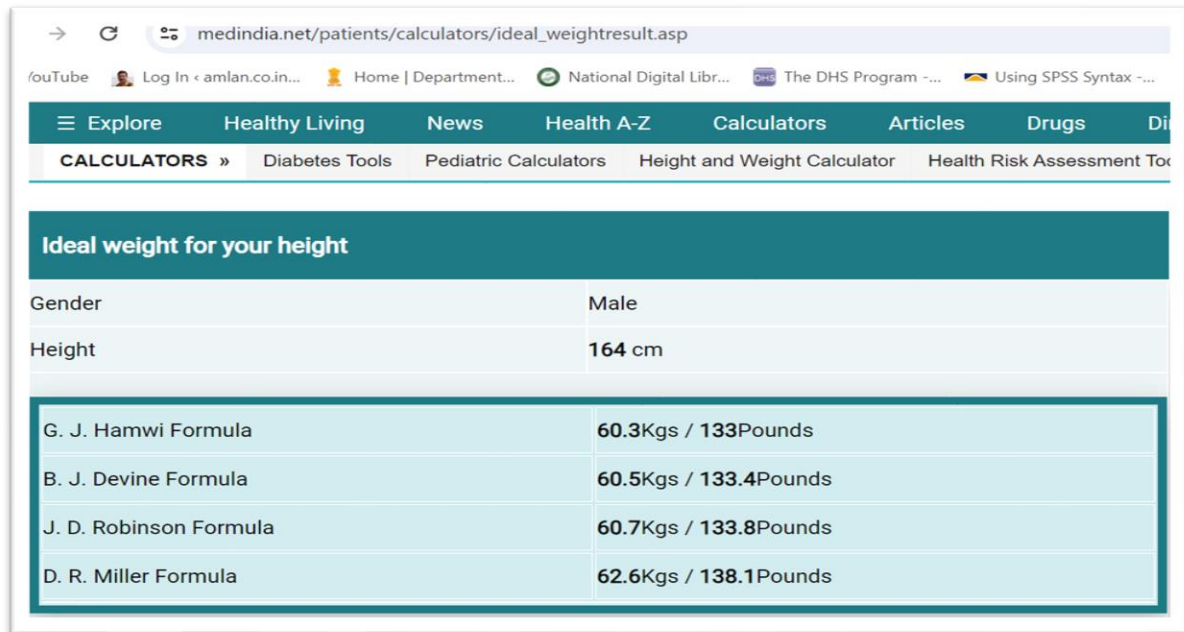
Formula	Ideal Weight
Robinson (1983)	60.7 kg
Miller (1983)	62.6 kg
Devine (1974)	60.5 kg
Hamwi (1964)	60.3 kg
Healthy BMI Range	49.8 - 67.2 kg

Figure 1. My ideal weight, as obtained from www.calculator.net.

³ <https://amlan.co.in/blog/> (Title of the post: A memorable trip to Chataidhura – an offbeat destination in Darjeeling on the occasion of Maha Shivaratri 2024).

⁴ <https://www.calculator.net/ideal-weight-calculator.html>.

⁵ https://www.medindia.net/patients/calculators/ideal_weight.asp.



Ideal weight for your height	
Gender	Male
Height	164 cm
G. J. Hamwi Formula	60.3Kgs / 133Pounds
B. J. Devine Formula	60.5Kgs / 133.4Pounds
J. D. Robinson Formula	60.7Kgs / 133.8Pounds
D. R. Miller Formula	62.6Kgs / 138.1Pounds

Figure 2. My ideal weight, as obtained from www.medindia.net.

As above, both the web portals ('Calculator.net' and 'Medindia') gave the same set of results. If I take the average of the four measures from any panel (for the sake of simplicity), my ideal weight appears to be 61 kgs (approx.). The good thing is that after completing nearly three and half months of intermittent fasting, my body weight reduced to 63 kgs (approx.) in the first week of June 2024 from around 72 kgs in the middle of February 2024.

Impact of intermittent fasting on body weight

The good thing is that after completing nearly three and half months of intermittent fasting, my body weight reduced to 63 kgs (approx.) in the first week of June 2024 from around 72 kgs in the middle of February 2024.

Another way of judging ideal height and weight is to consider Body Mass Index (BMI). In order to share the concept easily with my readers, I have performed a Google search in regard to the formula for calculating BMI and displayed the screenshot below. The formula is simple: body weight in kilograms (kgs) divided by the square of height in metre. According to the formula, a BMI of 25 and more indicates overweight. My BMI (in February 2024) was: $72/(1.64 \times 1.64) = 26.77$. As per the above classification, my BMI indicates overweight in February 2024. In the first week of June 2024, my BMI reduced to: $63/(1.64 \times 1.64) = 23.42$.

So, intermittent fasting, for three and half months, has been favourable for me in bringing down my BMI from 26.77 in the middle of February 2024 to 23.42 in the first week of June 2024.

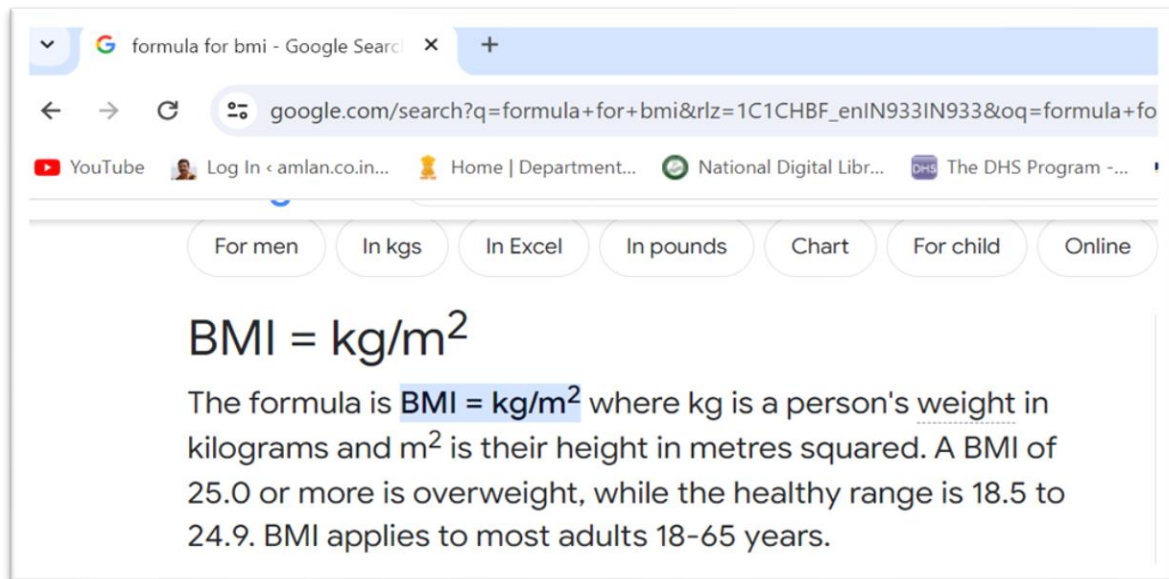


Figure 3. The formula for calculating Body Mass Index (BMI)

Impact of intermittent fasting on Body Mass Index (BMI)

Intermittent fasting, for three and half months, has been favourable for me in bringing down my BMI from 26.77 in the middle of February 2024 to 23.42 in the first week of June 2024.

3. Pathological investigations to observe impact of intermittent fasting on body

3.1. The first phase: 14 February 2024 to 13 March 2024

Although, I started intermittent fasting without knowing its physical benefits, I was being discouraged gradually for its possible detrimental effects on body by many around me. After practicing it nearly for one month, I decided to go for one pathological test of blood to see if there are changes in the functioning of my physical body. I went through such a test at the Health Centre of the University of North Bengal on 13 March 2024. I considered lipid profile, liver function tests, functioning of the kidney, level of glucose (fasting) etc. I am presenting results of some selected parameters in contrast to results of similar tests, which were done in 2020, 2022, and 2023 respectively below in table 1 (in Annexure-I).

The first three items (investigations) in the second column of table 1 are related to lipid profile. The next two items come under the liver function test. The sixth one is related to the functioning of the kidney. The last one is related to diabolic condition. The table is self-

explanatory. Results in the third column are obtained during the early phase of Covid-19 pandemic. However, I will focus on the results of the sixth column, which were obtained after following nearly one month of intermittent fasting. Results are not at all satisfactory, particularly in regard to the functioning of the liver. The SGOT/AST and SGPT/ALT parameters lie above the normal range.

The same SGOT/AST and SGPT/ALT parameters exceeded normal range in June 2022 also. I did not pay attention to those results in 2022. Obviously, I did not take any action in response to those. This is one of the reasons that I would like to analyse human actions or behaviour from holistic point of view. I have responded to similar pathological results in 2024 and changed my food habit drastically – with higher level of consciousness – exactly after 12 years from 2012, when I became vegetarian. It is to be noted that we had solar flare in 2012 also. However, for the understanding of my readers, I performed a Google search for SGOT and SGPT and what I have found is being presented below.

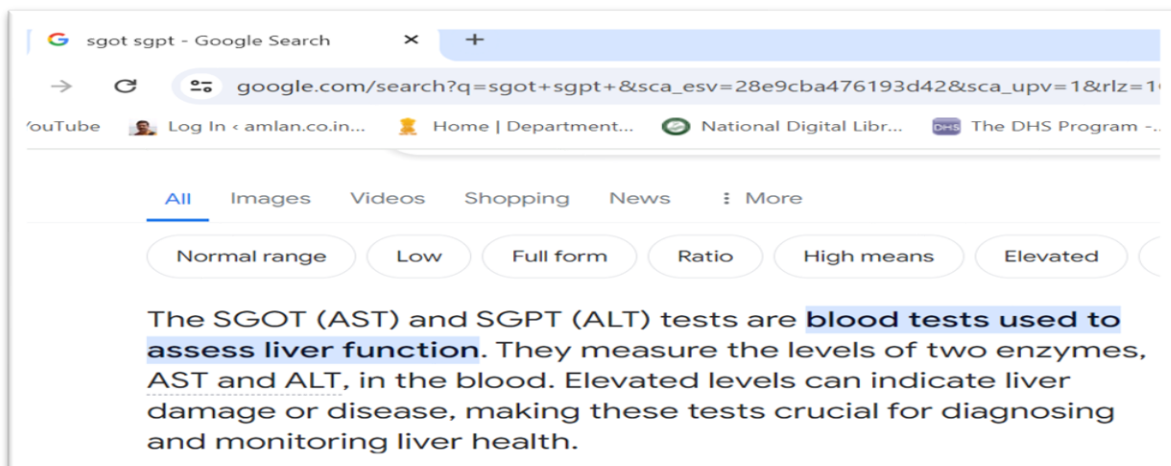


Figure 4. Basics of SGOT/AST and SGPT/ALT

The message (as presented above) is clear that high or elevated levels of SGOT and SGPT are matters of concern. But, from the above-mentioned results, I cannot say that parameters of the liver function test increased or decreased during the first month of intermittent fasting, as I have not done any test at the beginning of the fasting plan in the middle of February 2024. However, I did not give up. I ignored all the negative discussions on intermittent fasting around me. I started thinking positively. I prepared a rigorous plan of intermittent fasting from 15 March 2024.

3.2. The second phase: 15-29 March 2024

I spent one and half day in preparation of my second phase of intermittent fasting. I watched some YouTube sessions on liver care and got the idea about how to address issues related to it

naturally^{6,7,8}. Although, I have watched many YouTube videos, in order to just share some navigational clues with my readers, I have shared the selected two. As I do not smoke, do not drink (any alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages), I was confident enough that I will be able to address issues related to my liver naturally. I used to take black tea (without sugar) and packaged cow milk regularly. Instantly, I gave up tea and snacks, milk and milk products. I prepared a food chart (considering approximate level of calories) – as I understood from the YouTube sessions, Google searches, and thanks to my common intuition. I started following it strictly for two weeks (14 days). I restricted each meal to get somewhat 700 calories.

Sl. No.	Item	Amount (gm/ml)	Calorie
1	Orange / Mausambi	120	45
3	Apple	50	22
4	Beetroot	50	21
5	Carrot	60	25
6	Cucumber	200	24
7	Soaked peanut	10	57
8	Soaked chana	10	37
9	Cooked rice (Brown – long grain)	75	85
10	Roti (two small)	74	192
11	Cooked vegetables	250	200
12	Cooked lentils (Dal)	100	165
-	Total	779 gm + 220 ml	873

Rice meal: 873-192= 681 Calories; Roti meal: 873-85=788 Calories.
Additional: If curd added, 100 gm = 98 calories.

Figure 5. My sattvic food chart displayed on 07 April 2024

By 07 April 2024, I have printed the food chart (as shown in figure 5) and fixed it on the wall (of my kitchen room) near the dining table. I started following it strictly from 15 March 2024 (even before printing it). My family was staying away during the whole episode and I did not face any obstruction to implement my plan. However, after returning home, my wife also joined me with the displayed plan (with a light lunch at noon). I would like to mention here that I take salad and fruits at the beginning – before the main course. I am following this habit

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtzYTnQ94fl> (Dr. Palaniappan Manickam).

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEIY11PImc4> (Dr. Vivek Joshi).

⁸ I am thankful to Dr. Palaniappan Manickam and Dr. Vivek Joshi for their service to mankind. I tried to follow their advice at my level best with some minor alterations. For example, instead of taking juice of beetroot and carrots, I take those in the form of salad or in crashed forms.

since 2009⁹. So, as per the above chart, I take items 1-8 at the beginning; items 9 or 10 and 11-12 thereafter.

After following the above-mentioned food chart and strictly taking up to 700 calories in each of the two meals for two weeks, I felt much better. By looking at the 7th column of table 1, one can observe that levels of cholesterol and triglycerides came down significantly and there is a noticeable improvement in readings related to the liver function tests. SGOT/AST started showing a decline from 45 to 40.6 and SGPT/ALT has fallen from 60 to 46.2 in two weeks.

Impact of intermittent fasting on lipid profile and liver functions

Intermittent fasting, with intake of up to 700 calories in each of the two meals per day for two weeks reduced my levels of cholesterol from 159 to 142, and triglycerides from 165 to 112.8. SGOT/AST showed a decline from 45 to 40.6 and SGPT/ALT dropped from 60 to 46.2.

3.3. The third phase: 30 March 2024 to 18 May 2024

In the third phase, I followed the above-mentioned food chart and intermittent fasting for seven weeks (one month and 20 days) with some relaxations. Such as, occasionally, with the above-mentioned items, I took dal vada, medu vada, paneer tikka, curd etc. However, I tried to maintain 700 calories (approx.) in each meal. I went through pathological test of blood again on 18 May 2024. Results are quite satisfactory. The elevated readings of SGOT/AST and SGPT/ALT came down further. The 8th column of table 1 (in Annexure-I) shows that 50 days of further intermittent fasting (in continuation from the previous phase) brought down the levels of cholesterol from 142 to 126 and triglycerides from 112.8 to 77. Readings in regard to SGOT/AST declined from 40.6 to 27.8 and SGPT/ALT fell down from 46.2 to 24.9.

Further impact of intermittent fasting on lipid profile and liver functions

Further intermittent fasting for 50 more days, with intake of 700 calories (approx.) with some relaxations in each of the two meals per day brought down my levels of cholesterol from 142 to 126, and triglycerides from 112.8 to 77. SGOT/AST declined from 40.6 to 27.8 and SGPT/ALT came down from 46.2 to 24.9.

⁹ I am thankful to my brother-in-law (Dr. Avijit Das, Agricultural Scientist under ICAR), who suggested me to do so. I resonated with the idea, as traditionally, after any puja, while taking prasadam, we take fruits first, followed by cooked items, such as khichuri, labra (mixed vegetables), luchi, payesam etc.

4. The overall change in blood parameters due to intermittent fasting

I have started intermittent fasting in the middle of February 2024. The first and third pathological tests of blood were done on 13 March 2024 and 18 May 2024 respectively. The gap between the two tests is around two months or so (66 days). During this period, levels of cholesterol and triglycerides declined by 20.8 % and 53.3 % respectively. Similarly, the levels of SGOT/AST and SGPT/ALT decreased by 38.2 % and 58.5 % respectively. Are not these changes remarkable?

Overall impact of intermittent fasting on lipid profile and liver functions in two months

Intermittent fasting for 66 days, with intake of 700 calories (approx.) in each of the two meals per day lowered my levels of cholesterol and triglycerides by 20.8 % and 53.3 % respectively. Similarly, the levels of SGOT/AST and SGPT/ALT decreased by 38.2 % and 58.5 % respectively.

5. Conclusion

I started intermittent fasting to align my body-mind-spirit with the divine and extra energy that is coming down from the Sun with Solar Flare. On the way, I came to know about its practical benefits and realised those through some pathological tests or so. Some of the readings are not favourable. I hope that those will improve in near future. However, throughout the whole process, I had a very pleasant and joyous feelings, as if I am becoming pure and pure gradually every day. Satisfaction associated with intangible level of being always outweighs the same associated with the gain in physical outcomes. My productivity has increased. I work for longer hours at a stretch without lunch or tea breaks. Overall, I am fine with my plan of intermittent fasting and I look forward to continue it further – may be with some relaxations in terms of calorie intake and foodstuff. I am thankful to all around me, who are my nearer and dearer ones, and who were in worry about my health in recent past. I will now be able to assure them that intermittent fasting did not harm me. On this World Environment Day (2024), I hope that my small and trivial effort (as above) will help and benefit interested others in days to come.

A standard disclaimer

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Annexure-I

Table 1. Results of the pathological tests of blood done before and after the start of intermittent fasting*

Sl. No.	Investigation	Results ^a (12 June 2020)	Results ^a (14 June 2022)	Results ^a (12 April 2023)	Results ^a (13 March 2024)	Results ^b (29 March 2024)	Results ^b (18 May 2024)	Normal range
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
1	Cholesterol	136	180	140	159	142	126	< 200 mg/dl
2	Triglycerides	204	220	92	165	112.8	77	< 150 mg/dl
3	HDL Cholesterol	24	39	39	42	34.1	34.3	40-60 mg/dl
4	SGOT/AST	27	42	-	45	40.6	27.8	5-34 u/l
5	SGPT/ALT	44	57	-	60	46.2	24.9	0-55 u/l
6	Creatinine	1.1	0.7	-	0.9	0.99	1	0.6-1.2 mg/dl
7	Glucose (F)	105	80	84	101	-	82.4	70-110 mg/dl

* Some selected parameters are displayed only; Intermittent fasting started in the middle of February 2024; Original reports are available for further academic research/verification etc. ^a Tests were done at the pathological laboratory of the University of North Bengal¹⁰; ^b Tests were done at the Redcliffe labs, Siliguri¹¹.

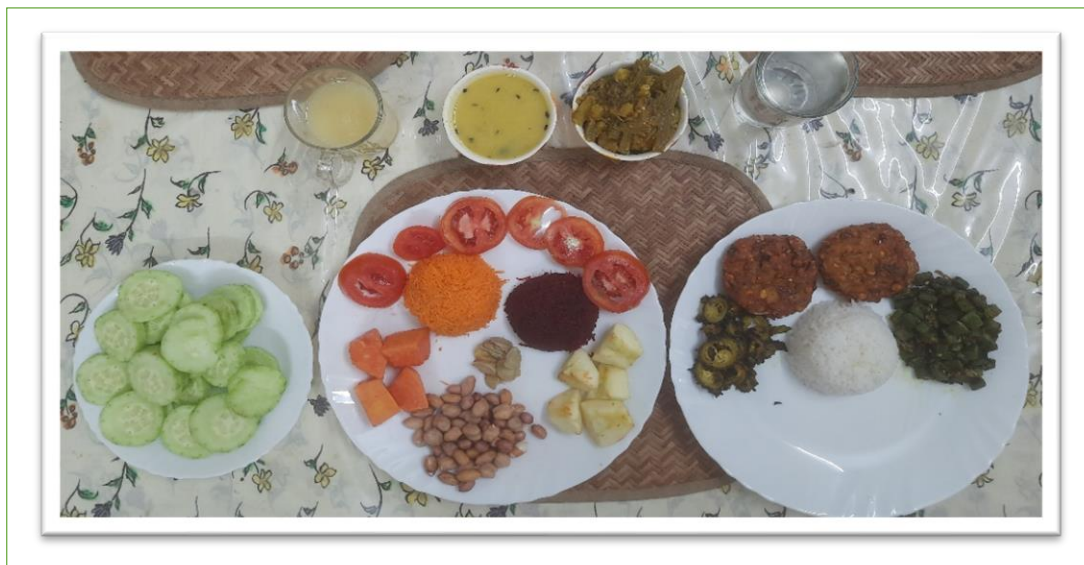


Photo (left): My meal on 25 May 2024 in the morning

Items: 1. Mausambi juice (120 ml), 2. Apple (50 gm), 3. Papaya (60 gm), 4. Beetroot (60 gm), 5. Carrot (50 gm), 6. Cucumber (200 gm), 7. Tomato (60 gm), 8. Zinger (7 gm), 9. Soaked peanuts and Kabuli chana (50 gm), 10. Cooked rice - Kalo Nunia (85 gm), 11. Urad dal (120 ml), 12. Mixed vegetable (150 gm), 13. Karola (Bitter gourd) fry (30 gm), 14. Dherosh (Okra) fry (50 gm), and 15. Chana dal vada (150 gm). 16. One tea spoonful of tahini (sesame paste – not shown in photo).

[Note: The meal contains more than 700 calories. However, I did not take the full of it on that day. Usually, I do not take more than one fruit item in each meal regularly. Dal vada was special for the day. I take beetroot and carrot, soaked peanuts and Kabuli chana in less quantity regularly. Also, I do not take a particular variety of rice regularly.]

¹⁰ I am thankful to Dr. Shubarna Kr. Paul of NBU Health Centre for valuable advice.

¹¹ I am also thankful to the Redcliffe labs for an inspiring follow-up through a telephonic doctor consultation session.