

Holistic Benefits of Millets in Ayurveda

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Abstract

An examination of millets and Ayurveda demonstrates a deep relationship that goes beyond simple nutrition and provides a comprehensive approach to health. Ancient small-seeded grains called millets and the traditional Indian medical system known as Ayurveda work together to create a symbiotic relationship that connects health, wellbeing, and sustainable life. This essay explores the nutritional analysis of millets, their medicinal applications in Ayurveda, their health advantages, and the role of Ayurveda in endorsing millets as a mainstay for general well-being.

Keywords: Millets, Ayurveda, Holistic Health, Nutritional Value, Therapeutic Uses

Introduction

People all across the world are turning more and more to traditional practises and old teachings that fit in well with modern lifestyles in search of holistic well-being. Millets, a family of small-seeded grains that have been grown for many years, and Ayurveda, an age-old Indian medical system, have a deep relationship that goes beyond simple nutrition. Ayurveda and millets work in harmony to promote a comprehensive approach to health that integrates wellbeing, nutrition, and sustainable living. Uncovering a profound synergy that not only nourishes the body but also fosters a deeper connection between individuals and the environment, millets and Ayurveda weave a complex tapestry that provides a road to long-lasting well-being. Millets are a family of grasses with tiny seeds that have been cultivated and eaten by people for countless years. Millets are a great option for anyone with diabetes or trying to control their blood sugar levels because they are low in glycemic index, gluten, and a high source of nutrients. A balanced diet is crucial for preserving health, according to the ancient Indian medical science of Ayurveda. For ages, millet, a family of grasses with small seeds, has played a significant role in traditional meals across many regions of the world. According to Ayurveda, millets are among the most vital grains for a person's diet. Millets are packed with nutrients and they are easy to digest, making them an excellent choice for people with digestive problems or those who are looking for a healthier alternative to refined grains.

Analysis and Use of the Nutritional Value of Millets

Glucose Millets: are an excellent source of complex carbohydrates, which give the body energy. Millets are rich in fiber, which slows down the absorption of carbohydrates, keeping you fuller for longer and avoiding blood sugar spikes, in contrast to processed grains, which are deprived of their fiber and minerals.

Proteins Millets: Are a great option for vegetarians and vegans because they are a strong source of plant-based protein. With a protein content of up to 7.3%, finger millet is especially high in protein.

Dietary Fiber: found in millets, is important for keeping the digestive tract in good working order. Fiber aids in the growth of beneficial gut flora, the regulation of bowel movements, and the prevention of constipation.

Vitamins Millets: Are an excellent source of B1, B2, B3, and B6 vitamins, among other vitamins. These vitamins are necessary to keep the liver, eyes, hair, and skin in good condition.

Minerals Millets: Iron, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium are among the many minerals found in millets. These minerals are necessary for blood pressure regulation, fluid equilibrium in the body, and the maintenance of strong bones, teeth, and muscles.

Millets	Therapeutic uses
Sama (Barnyard Millet)	Obesity, Raktapitta, Pittajkasa, Urustambha, Stanyadosa, Jalodara
Kodo Millet	Obesity, Raktapitta, Pittajkasa, Visha, Urustambha,
Gavedhuk Kanguni (foxtail Millet)	Obesity, Kapaj Chardi
Kanguni (foxtail Millet)	KusthaVatakarak, Pittadahanashak, Bhagna asthi Sandhan
Jwar	Brihana Malrodhak, Ruchikarak, Viryavardhak
Ragi (Finger Millet)	Brihana Triptikarak Balakarak, Raktapitta Shamak
Bajra	Balya, Agnideepak, Strikamodpadaka,
Neewar	Raktapitta, Vatarakta, Pathya, Kaphkarak, Malamutrardhak
Cheena (Common Millet)	Brihana

Source: Nitin Juneja

Millets	Protein (gm)	Fiber (gm)	Minerals (gm)	Iron (gm)	Calcium (gm)
Sorghum	11	6.7	2.7	3.4	13
Finger millet	7.3	3.6	2.7	3.9	344

Foxtail millet	12.3	8	3.3	2.8	31
Kodo millet	8.3	9	2.6	0.5	27
Little millet	7.7	7.6	1.5	9.3	17
Pearl millet	10.6	1.3	2.3	16.9	35
Proso millet	12.5	2.2	1.9	0.8	14
Barnyard millet	11.2	10.1	4.4	15.2	11

Source: Nitin Juneja

Health Benefits of Millets

People today are very concerned about their health. The secret source is millets for antioxidants, phytochemicals that promote health, and nutraceuticals in addition to being a useful food.

Diabetes: Millets can reduce blood glucose levels by enzymatically hydrolyzing complex carbs in hyperglycemia. The enzyme aldose reductase helps to lessen the accumulation of sorbitol and reduces the risk of acquiring diabetes. Additionally, millet helps control blood sugar levels and slows the healing of wounds. Consuming whole grain meals can help prevent and treat diabetes mellitus. Research has indicated that millet consumption lowers the incidence of diabetes in some groups. Numerous studies look into how millet grains affect diabetes in people (males and females). Results showed that individuals who included millet in their diet had reduced blood sugar levels.

Cancer: The antinutrients included in millets, including phenolics, tannins, and phytates, reduce the chance of getting cancer. It has phenolics, which can help prevent cancer from starting and spreading. Millets contain folic acid, which aids in the prevention of tumours. Sorghum possesses anticancer and timutagenic properties because to its tannins and polyphenols. Millet grains are rich in phenolic acids, tannins, and phytate, which are considered 'antinutrients'. The phenolics in millets may be able to stop the formation and spread of cancer in vitro, per a new study.

Celiac Illness: One of the hereditary disorders known as celiac disease is caused by gluten, a cereal

grain component mostly present in wheat. Because millets don't contain gluten, they are less sensitive to other cereal grains. Celiac disease sufferers can eat and drink millets-based foods and beverages because they don't contain gluten.

Heart Disease: Magnesium, present in millets, can reduce the chance of having a heart attack. A rich source of phytochemicals that lower cholesterol and help prevent heart disease is millets. Millets are a good source of vital amino acids, phytochemicals, minerals, and protein. It is essential for maintaining good health and preventing diseases like diabetes, hyperlipidemia, and others.

Nutrients Elements in each Millet

Finger Millet - Rich in calcium and polyphenols.

Foxtail Millet - Rich in protein; food for diabetes patients.

Proso Millet - Rich in Thiamine; food for cardiac patients.

Barnyard Millet - High in fiber and best alternative to rice.

Kodo Millet - High lecithin (used for Dementia and Alzheimer).

Little Millet - Food for boosting immunity.

Job's Tear - Rich in protein, high leucin and glutamic acid.

Browntop Millet - Food for constipation, rich in fiber.

The Role of Ayurveda in Promoting Millets

India is the world's largest millet crop and product producer and consumer. Millets fulfill two purposes in rural areas by being a staple diet for animals and humans. Many grains are an essential component of the diet in many communities since they are affordable, grow organically, and ensure food security. Millets like teff and fonio are also frequently grown throughout Africa.

The significance of millets stems from the fact that their natural growth, nutritional richness, and purity are emphasized in ancient books and ancestral customs, making them a vital component of a daily meal. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been defined by the UN, and they include ending hunger, ending poverty, and promoting good health and wellbeing. AYUSH practitioners can advocate

for these goals by promoting millet consumption and incorporating millet-based preparations into the food market.

Due to their many benefits, millets are a necessary crop. Because of their resistance to drought, they can flourish in arid environments where other crops could wither. They are an environmentally beneficial choice because their innate resistance to illnesses and pests reduces the need for chemical treatments. Additionally, millets have a brief growing season, which guarantees a prompt and consistent food supply. They are nutrient powerhouses, supplying vital vitamins and minerals. They have an alkaline-forming effect, which aids in preserving the body's proper pH balance. Millets are a safe option for people with gluten intolerance because they are gluten-free. They are also a great diet option for physical laborers due to their high nutritional value, which supplies the energy and nutrients needed for physical labor.

According to Nutraceutical, types of millets are based on area grown and its grain size, are classified as major and minor millets:

1. Major millets - Pearl millet (Bajra), Finger millet (Ragi)
2. Minor millets - Foxtail millet (Kangni), Proso millet (Cheena), Little millet, Kodo millet, Barnyard millet.

In Ayurveda, Millets (Sridhanya) are Listed with Scientific Names:

1. Ragi - Finger Millet [*Eleusine Coracana*]

Slow movement of energy flow, digestion takes long time and it pulls energy/heat/Agni from the body and this needs less water content in the soil or grows on dry soil. These are rich in calcium and polyphenols.

2. Priyangu - Foxtail Millet [*Setaria Italica*]

It is best for bone grafting or strengthening of bones. This seeds are rich in protein, and phosphorous and helps in repair and growth in the body and strengthening of bones. It is recommended for lifestyle disorders, for example diabetes. It is also a poultry food, supplied in poultry farms.

3. Cheenak - Proso Millet [*Panicum Miliaceum* Linn]

It is rich in carbo and protein both, so, it is used

for fermented and malting types of food items; in comparable to wheat, cheenak has the high content of minerals content so helps in overall growth of the body.

4. Shayamak - Barnyard Millet [Echinochloa Frumentacea]

This is generally used for spiritual and fasting purpose, commonly known as vrit ka chawal. It is different from simple rice. Also rich in starch, protein, vitamin B1, zinc, iron.

5. Kordush - Kodo Millet [Paspalum Scrobiculatum]

This is recommended for diabetic patients on the place of rice.

6. Sawai - Little Millet [Panicum Sumatrense]

This is the traditional crop of India and very small in size also consumed at the place of rice. It is rich in protein, niacin and phosphorus.

7. Gavedhuk - Jobs Tear [Coix Lacryma Jobi]

It is rich in protein, iron, and zinc; glutamic and leucin; so, it helps in reducing obesity. It is widely grown in India.

8. Bajra - Pearl Millet [Pennisetum Typhoides]

It is widely used in North India regions and a recommended food in winter also Rich in iron, magnesium, phosphorus and high fiber content.

9. Jowar - Yavnal Millet [Sorghum Valgare]

It is used in rural areas as the nutritious diet for domestic animals; is also used as a staple diet for common cooking purpose. It is rich in protein, calcium, iron and phosphorus.

Conclusion

As the related domains of millets and Ayurveda are examined, it is clear that their relationship goes beyond simple nutrition to include a deep complementarity that promotes overall health. The ancient wisdom of Ayurveda and the nutrient-denseness of millets work together to create a powerful combination that addresses many aspects of lifespan and health. In Ayurvedic practises, millets - which come in a variety of kinds, including Finger Millet, Foxtail Millet, Proso Millet, and others - occur not just as staple foods but also as medicinal agents. Their profusion of vital elements, including

as vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber, proteins, and carbs, not only satisfies the body's needs but also harmoniously fits with Ayurvedic principles that advocate for a balanced diet. Ayurveda offers specialised treatments for a range of medical ailments by acknowledging the distinct therapeutic qualities of each millet variety. Including millets in diets can help with obesity, diabetes, cancer prevention, and bone health. These benefits align with Ayurvedic suggestions for individualised health. Furthermore, millets' robustness and sustainability complement the worldwide movement for ecologically responsible living. The ancient knowledge contained in the combination of millets and ayurveda presents itself as a lighthouse of holistic health as the globe struggles with health issues and looks for long-term remedies. Within the Ayurvedic framework, millets are considered more than merely grains; instead, they are considered 'Sridhanya', with innate properties that support general well-being and energy. Since Ayurveda places a strong emphasis on the relationship between the mind, body, and environment, adding millets to regular diets is one way to achieve harmony and health.

In summary, the combination of millet and ayurveda provides a comprehensive connection to health that extends beyond the plate. It represents a return to traditional knowledge, a sustainable diet, and a deep comprehension of the close relationship between environmental health and human health. We set out on a path towards everlasting well-being as we accept this comprehensive paradigm, led by the needs of the present and the knowledge of the past.

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