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## A Review on Medicinal Uses of Fenugreek

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### ABSTRACT

Herbs have high medicinal value in Indian homes. Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*) is one of the most promising medicinal herbs and having nutritional value found on the continents of Asia, Europe, Africa and Australia. It is traditional remedy for treatment of various diseases. After various studies on its chemical constituents the therapeutic importance of fenugreek is known. Seeds provide the dietary fibres because of high fibre content. Fenugreek contains the gum, fibre, alkaloid, flavonoids, saponin and volatile contents. It has various therapeutic applications like antidiabetic, anticarcinogenic, hypocholesterolemia and antioxidant, antibacterial agent, hypoglycemia, gastric stimulant, and anti-anorexia agent etc. This review article summarizes the scientific literature from the databases and published experimental research. The results of this paper showed the various the therapeutic importance of fenugreek.

**Keywords:** Fenugreek, Methi, medicinal uses, nutrition value of methi.

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### INTRODUCTION

Fenugreek is an annual plant/herb which is a well-known leafy vegetable. It is Nature's gift boon to mankind and its regular use will help keep the body healthy. This very herb cum plant is native to southern Europe and Asia and is an erect annual herb with white flowers and hard, yellowish brown and angular seeds. It bears small-balloon shaped, light green leaves; sized 2-2.5 cm which gives a pungent and aromatic flavour. It can be grown in kitchen gardens, backyards, fields, gardens, pots etc like this. It grows well in loamy-black soil.



Fenugreek seeds for health

### Varieties of Fenugreek (Methi)

There are two popular varieties of fenugreek known as *Kasuri Methi* or *Champa Methi*; and *Marwari Methi*. Both varieties are scented and recommended for cultivation.

## **Nomenclature of Fenugreek (Methi)**

**English name**– Fenugreek

**Hindi name**– Methi

**Kingdom**– Plantae

**Family name**– Fabaceae

**Botanical name**– *Trigonella foenum-graecum*

## **Uses of Fenugreek (Methi)**

There are multiple uses of Fenugreek, some of which are listed below:

- 1) A well-known flatbread called “Methi ke parathe“ is prepared using Fenugreek leaves.
- 2) Fenugreek is even used as a condiment to prepare snack items.
- 3) Dried leaves of the fenugreek are used for flavouring meat, fish and vegetable dishes.
- 4) Seeds of fenugreek are also used as a cosmetic item; like in face packs, hair masks, and many more.
- 5) Fenugreek seeds and leaves are also used as an ingredient in herbal tea.
- 6) The seeds are sprouted and taken as a snack item or cooked.
- 7) The green leaves are used to prepare curry called ‘saag‘; or also used to cook different curry items.

## **Nutrition in Fenugreek (Methi)**

Well, if a small herb can be so beneficial then of course, it must be having a big list of nutritive items in it. Have a look at following-

- 1) copper
- 2) potassium
- 3) calcium
- 4) iron
- 5) selenium
- 6) zinc
- 7) manganese
- 8) magnesium
- 9) thiamine
- 10) folic acid
- 11) riboflavin
- 12) niacin
- 13) Vitamins A, B6, and C
- 14) Dietary fibres
- 15) Sodium
- 16) Saturated fats

## **Health benefits of Fenugreek (Methi)**

### **1) Treats Dandruff**

Seeds of Fenugreek work really well to cure dandruff and itchy scalp. It is anti-fungal and anti-microbial in nature. Take 1/2 cup of fenugreek seeds and soak them overnight. Next morning grind the seeds and add curd 1/2 lemon to it. Mix well and apply on the scalp. It will take 20-30 minutes for drying; rinse it and shampoo your hair. In 2-3 uses it will remove dandruff and will make your hair strong, shiny and lustrous. You can use it as a hair mask twice a month. Using fenugreek as a part of your diet or as a paste to directly apply to your hair makes your hair shiny and black.

## 2) **Helpful in Anemia**

The leaves of fenugreek are rich in Iron and thus help in blood formation. The cooked leaves are extremely useful to cure anaemia in adolescent girls and run-down condition which is generally associated with the onset of puberty and sudden spurt of growth. The seeds of fenugreek must be included in food for better results. Apart from Iron, it is also rich in zinc, sodium, potassium and certain other trace minerals which are really good for health.

## 3) **Increases the size of breasts**

The oestrogen-like property of fenugreek can help in breast enlargement by balancing hormones in women. One should include an ample amount of fenugreek in her daily diet. A medicated oil cooked with fenugreek seeds is also good as a breast size enhancer. Apart from this, it also helps to increase milk production. So, fenugreek is a good thing for nursing mothers.

## 4) **Cures Diabetes**

Fenugreek seeds have been found highly effective in the treatment of diabetes. According to a recent report brought out by the Indian Council of Medical Research, as quoted by Press Trust of India, Fenugreek seeds when given in varying doses of 25 grams to 100 grams daily, diminish reactive hyperglycaemia in diabetic patients. Its level of glucose also reduces when the seeds are consumed. Because galactomannan, a natural soluble fibre present in fenugreek slows down the rate of sugar absorption into the blood. Thus, diabetic patients should include fenugreek in their daily diet to balance their sugar levels.

## 5) **Cures Halitosis**

Halitosis which is characterized by a foul smell from the mouth can be naturally cured with the use of fenugreek. One should take herbal tea prepared with fenugreek. The unpleasant odour occurring from the mouth can be due to several reasons; lack of nourishment, gum decay, cavity, any kind of disease, lack of personal hygiene and many more. The fenugreek tea taken regularly will help remove these accumulations from such spots where mouthwash and soap can never penetrate.

## 6) **Strengthens the Digestive system**

The digestive system is the system which is responsible for the digestion of ingested foodstuff. Guess what will happen if this system gets feverish? It will be much more painful than cancer itself. The liver is recognized as one of the most important parts of the Digestive system. Fenugreek leaves are highly beneficial in the treatment of indigestion, flatulence and sluggish liver. They help in the healing of mouth ulcers. The seeds are also useful in the treatment of colic, flatulence, dysentery, dyspepsia and diarrhoea.

## 7) **Helps to treat Urinary disorders**

There are multiple kinds of urinary disorders, but mostly the cause remains the same bacterial infection or yeast. These diseases can be minor as well as major. In allopath, there are several medications and surgery processes but they are quite unsatisfactory and not affordable for everyone. Fenugreek leaves are very good to treat diseases like kidney infections, painful urination and many more. Include fresh fenugreek leaves in your daily diet; you can also boil the leaves in water; strain it and drink the water. A kind of pungent and fenugreek kind of smell will be felt in urination. With regular intake of these leaves, the infection will be erased.

## 8) **Helpful in Sore throat**

Sore throat is mostly seen during monsoons or during climatic changes. The gargle made from fenugreek seeds is the best for ordinary sore throat. Repeat this process, twice to thrice a day; if chronic. When preparing a gargle, the solution should be much stronger than tea. 2 tablespoonfuls of fenugreek seeds should be put into a quart of cold water and allowed to simmer for 30 minutes over a low flame. After getting cool to a bearable temperature; strain the entire solution and gargle with this.

#### 9) **Aids in Body odour**

6 out of 10 are suffering from body odour. This case gets much more chronic during the summer seasons. In society, this thing makes one ashamed and nobody wants to enjoy the company of that person. Deodorants, roll-ons, perfumes etc work for a while and after that disappears leaving you with a foul smell. Actually, there can be many reasons for this like obesity, lack of personal hygiene, blockage of skin pores, skin infections and many more. Now, using fenugreek you can skip out with this condition. Make a fine powder of fenugreek seeds; immerse it in water for a few minutes and use it as a body scrub. You can also mix a solution of fenugreek leaves and water in your regular bathing water. Apart from that opt for fenugreek leaves in your diet and daily tea too. All these procedures will help you to recover soon with body odour condition.

#### 10) **Lowers Blood cholesterol**

According to the studies, fenugreek helps to reduce cholesterol levels, especially that of the low-density lipoprotein (LDL). They are known to be a rich source of steroidal saponins that prevent the absorption of cholesterol and triglycerides. These act like fat-cutter and also help to remove blockages from heart arteries. For obese persons, fenugreek is like a miracle. This simple herb has multiple benefits and uses.

### **CONCLUSION**

Fenugreek is one of the supplements used to support non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus. Fenugreek seed helps by not only reducing blood sugar levels due to its high concentrations of phytochemicals, but it has also helped reduce low density cholesterol. Fenugreek has an extensive variety of actions which are likely to protect human body against a number of abnormalities. In spite of various actions of *Trigonella foenum-graecum* on chronic disorders, the relevant clinical applications and mechanism of action is still to be the area of research. In this review article, various activities like antidiabetic antioxidant, anticarcinogenic, antiulcer, antifertility, immunomodulatory and many more discussed last three decades. High fiber, protein content and other bioactive compounds make it a naturally several health promoting herb. Anti-cataract effect of this plant is a significant pharmacological activity, which should be focused more in the future.

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