

Fenugreek for Health

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Fenugreek is a spice and an herb our housewives use in most curry cooking. Every Asian kitchen seems to stock fenugreek. It gets its name from Latin root *Foenum Graecum* or Greek Hay. It is a hard seed to touch, and the plant looks like a wild clover. The herb adds flavour and nutrition to your cooking and can be added on to most Indian and Sri Lankan dishes. The leaves and seeds have a slightly bitter taste, but it is not so noticeable when tomatoes are added or when it is cooked with meat or lentils, namely Dal. The use of fenugreek seeds in diabetes is well documented.



Fenugreek is rich in potassium, phosphorus, magnesium, calcium iron and small amounts of copper, zinc, selenium and manganese. It has vitamin C, B6, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, folate and vitamin A.

The seeds are used in pickles. Masala or as curry powder. Kasoori methi or dried fenugreek leaves are another way of using this herb. The leaves are dried and preserved and used throughout the year in rotis or flat bread. They add much needed fibre and nutrition to the bread, this is an easy way of making children eat the green leafy vegetables which they generally dislike.

Long term daily use seems to reduce your bad cholesterol levels, and also lowers glucose levels. It is possible that high fibre content reduces the absorption of digested carbohydrates causing less spiking of glucose in the blood. The seeds are most popular for the control of diabetes. It may be that fenugreek helps to reduce the sugar levels in the blood, but should not rely on it alone to control diabetes.

Breast feeding mothers use a lot of fenugreek. They say that it is a galactagogue- meaning increases lactation in breast feeding mothers.

Like garlic, seeds are good for indigestion and flatulence.

Fenugreek has oestrogen like properties and may help to relieve pain during menopause.

Quick Dhal (lentil) curry (reference:-Hub pages)

Chop up onions, tomatoes. In a pan pour a teaspoon of oil, add cumin and mustard seed to it, when they splutter, add the onions and the tomatoes and sauté them. Add a little water and some salt to taste and when the contents of the pan get thick and pulpy add fresh or dried fenugreek leaves and chili flakes to it and sauté for a couple of minutes. Add cooked dal to this and you have a healthy dal to be eaten with rice or rotis. Simple, healthy and fresh food cooked in minutes.

If you are allergic to peanuts better avoid fenugreek in your curries.