

# Nutritional and Health Benefits of Millets

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## *ABSTRACT*

Millets are a power house of nutrition and an effective tool to address malnutrition. Millets are rich in diverse nutrients, including protein, dietary fibre, vitamin B, calcium, iron, manganese, magnesium, phosphorous, zinc, potassium, copper and selenium. Millets are a whole grain that is packed with protein, antioxidants and nutrients. They may have numerous health benefits such as helping lower bloodsugar and cholestrol level. they are gluten free making them an excellent choice for people who have celiac disease or follow a gluten free diet. Millet can contribute to the alleviation of Zinc, Iron, and Protein malnutrition affecting women and preschool children.

**Keywords:** Millets, Nutrition, malnutrition.

### **Introduction:-**

Millet is one of the oldest cultivated grains in the world and has been grown throughout Africa and south east Asia for thousands of years. Today it is one of the most important cereals around and is a staple crop for humans and animals. The small round gains are so important because they are hardy and easy to store for years without insect damage. Millets are a traditional staple food of the dry land regions of the world. They are nutriceals which are highly nutritions and are known to have high nutrient content which includes protein essential fatty acids, dietary fibre, B-Vitamins, minerals such as calcium, iron, zinc, potassium and magnesium. They help in rendering health benefits like reduction in blood sugar level, blood pressure regulation, theyroid, cardio-vascular and celiac diseases.

The major reason of decrease in consumption of millets is the lack of awareness of nutritional merits, inconvenience towards millets and favouring of supply of fine cereals at subsidized prices. It is important to explore ways for creating awareness on nutritional merits of millet. Millets are found to be helpful with the reduction of weight, BMI and high blood pressure. In India, Millet is generally consumed with legumes which creates mutual supplementation of protein, increases the amino-acid content and enhances the

overall digestibility of protein. Millet based value added products in ready to cook, ready to eat category are easily accessible and convenient to the urban population. Millets are used for dual purposes as food as well as fodder which make it more farming efficient. Millet cultivation helps to reduce the carbon foot print.

Major Millets grown in India:-

1. Pearls Millet (Bajra)
2. Finger Millet (Ragi)
3. Foxtail Millet (Kangani)
4. Little Millet (Kutki)
5. Kodo Millet (Kodra)
6. Barnyard Millet (Sanna)
7. Proso Millet (Cheena)
8. Browntop Millet (Korale)
9. Sorghum (Jowar)
10. Buckwheat Millet (Kuttu)

### **Health Benefits of Millet:**

1. **Pearl Millet** - It is a rich source of vitamin E, protects body tissues from free radical damage.
2. **Finger Millet**- It helps in strengthening and development of bones and helps in fighting against anaemia.

3. **Foxtail Millet** - Rich in calcium helps in fight disease such as osteoporosis and reduces risk of fracture.
  4. **Little Millet** - It helps to improve the health of the heart. An ideal food for diabetes, as it prevents abnormal spike in blood sugar levels.
  5. **Kodo Millet** - It is excellent for strengthening the nervous system.
  6. **Barnyard Millet** - It contains high amount of iron, helps producing haemoglobin.
  7. **Proso Millet**- Controls depression, lowers blood pressure and acts as anti inflammatory.
  8. **Sorgham** - Anti-oxidants reduces the risk of CVD and colon cancer. High insoluble fibre and reduces the risk of diseases such as type 2 diabetes.
  9. **Buckwheat Millet** - It lowers the blood pressure and is diabetic friendly. It is beneficial for cardiovascular health.
2. **Aids weight loss**- Millets have a low calorie count and they are an excellent food product for weight loss.
  3. **Keeps blood sugar level low**- Millets have a low glycemic index which makes them an excellent food for regulating blood sugar levels.
  4. **Boost immunity** - Millets provide a great source of protein and can help develop and strengthen immunity.
  5. **Reduces Cardio-vascular risk**- The essential fats found in millets provide our body with good fats which prevent excess fat storage, effectively lowering the risk of high cholesterol, strokes and other heart complains. The potassium content in millets regulates blood pressure and optimizes circulatory system.
  6. **Revents asthma** - The magnesium content in millets can reduce the frequency and severity of migraine and asthma complainants.
  7. **Helps digestion** - Millets are a rich source of fibre that benefits digestion by alleviating bloating gas, cramping and constipation.
  8. **Acts as an antioxidant** - Millets help boody detox because of their antioxidant properties.
  9. **Millet is naturally gluten free.**

In short we can say that these are the health benefits of incorporating millets in our diet.

#### **Nutritional Benefits of Millets:-**

Millets are a rich source of nutrients including protien, fibre and micronutrients like magnesium, potassium and zinc. It also has a low glycemic index which means it does not cause a rapid spike in blood sugar levels. This makes it an ideal food for people with diabets or anyone looking to maintain stable blood sugar levels.

**Nutritional facts:** Each 100 gm. of cooked millet contains the following:-

- 3.51 gm. of protein
- 23.7 gm. of carbohydrae
- 1.3 gm of dietary fibre
- 44 mg. of magnesium
- 0.161 mg. of copper
- 100mg. of phosphorus
- 0.272 mg. of manganese

1. **Promotes digestive helath**- It helps to prevent constipation and reduce the risk of colon cancer. Additionally, millets contain prebiotics which promote the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gut improving overall gmt health.

#### **Conclusion :**

So, millets are highly nutritions and climate compliant crops. Millets are now being promoted as superfoods deservingly soo considering that they are highly nutritions and have several health benefits to their credits. In the long term it will be a win-win situation resulting in the revival of the indigenous superfood.

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