

Role of Herbs in Human Nutrition

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ARTICLE ID: 030







Introduction

Human nutrition is all about the nutrients. Human body majorly functions with the help of the nutrients. Nutrients are the organic and inorganic compound, which are helpful in, maintenance of a healthy body. These nutrients such as protein, carbohydrate, fat; vitamins and minerals are derived from the various sources of plants and animals. Herbs are the leaf part of a plant that is used in cooking – these can be used fresh or dried. Herbs are a fantastic way to add flavor and color to any sort of dish or drink, whether sweet or savory, without adding fat, salt or sugars. In addition to flavor and color, they each also tend to have their own set of health benefits.

In present scenario, herbs are used worldwide for various purposes. The production of herbs in India is larger than in any other countries. Herbs have been highest medicinal and nutritional value, which plays a significant role in human nutrition. Herbs are rich in nutrients as well as having medicinal values. Table 1 gives a glimpse of some major herbs such as Tulsi, Stevia, Parsley and coriander leaves, etc. It showed that how herbs can be useful in human nutrition. Table 1 contains the common name of herbs, their scientific name, and the uses of these herbs.

Table: 1 Herb and its Uses

Herbs (Common Name)	Herbs (Scientific Name)	Uses	Images
Tulsi	Ocimumtenuiflorum	Natural Immune Booster, Reduces Cold and Cough, Antidiabetic, Antifungal, Anticancer.	

Stevia	<i>Stevia rebaudiana</i>	Zero Calorie sweetener helps in reduction of energy, alternative use of sugar	
Curry Leaves	<i>Murrayakoenigii</i>	Antioxidant, Hepatoprotective, Anticancerous, Anti Diabetic	
Mint	<i>Mentha</i>	Antibacterial properties, antinociceptive and antipyretic properties, used in gastrointestinal disorders such as in chronic diarrhea.	
Khus/ Lemon grass	<i>Chrysopogonzizanioides</i>	Antimicrobial action, Antifungal activity, digestive stimulus activity, antioxidant activity, antimicrobial action, anti-inflammatory, hypolipemic, anti-carcinogenic activity and antimutagenic .	
Watercress	<i>Nasturtium officinale</i>	It has been used to treat jaundice, asthma, bronchitis, scurvy, tuberculosis, urinary tract infection	
Coriander leaves	<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>	Antioxidant activity, diuretic, ant-diabetic, sedative, antimicrobial activity, anti-convulsant activity, hypnotic activity and anthelmintic activity and anti-mutagenic	




Parsley	<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>	Parsley has been used as carminative, gastro tonic, diuretic, antiseptic of urinary tract, anti-urolithiasis, anti-dote and anti-inflammatory and for the treatment of amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea, gastrointestinal disorder, hypertension, cardiac disease, urinary disease, otitis, snuffle, diabetes and also various dermal disease in traditional and folklore medicines.	
Sage/ Tejpatta/ Bay Leaf	<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	Antioxidant, stomachaches, clear up mucus in the lungs, colds, and sore throat.	
Fenugreek	<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i>	Used to alleviate cold cough, splenomegaly, hepatitis, backache, and bladder cooling reflex	

Table:-2 Describes About the Nutritional Value of the Herbs. It showed that Herbs are Rich Source of Nutrients Especially in Vitamins and Minerals.

Table: 2 Nutritional Values of Herbs (100/g)

Herbs	Energy (Kcal)	Protein (g)	Fat (g)	Carbohydrate (g)	Dietary Fibre (g)	Sodium (mg)	Potassium (mg)	Calcium (mg)	Iron (mg)
Tulsi	23	3.15	0.64	2.65	1.60	4	295	177	3.17
Curry Leaves	108	6.1	0.6	23	6.4	4	295	830	0.93
Mint	70	3.75	0.94	14.79	8	31	569	243	5.08
Lemon Grass	99	1.82	0.49	25.31		6	723	65	8.17
Coriander Leaves	23	2.13	0.52	3.67	2.80	46	521	67	1.77
Parsley	36	2.97	0.8	6.33	3.3	56	554	138	6.20
Bay Leaf	313	7.61	8.36	74.97	26.3	23	529	834	43
Fenugreek	12	0.85	0.24	2.16	0.9	2	28	7	1.24

(Source: USDA National Nutrient database)

Herbs have proven health benefits and their consumption will keep diseases at bay and allow humans to maintain an overall good health. Herbs have been significant role in the promotion of good

health and disease prevention. These herbs are abundant source of nutrients and various anti disease properties e.g. antidiabetic, antibacterial, antifungal and hepatoprotective etc. The recommended amount of herbs can be taken by individual for prevention of various diseases.

Reference

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