

Millets: A Today's Health Booster

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Introduction

Millets are a highly varied group of small-seeded grasses, widely grown around the world as cereal crops or grains for fodder and human food. They are known as poor man's food grain. Millets are of two types: first one is naked grains and the other one is husked grains. Naked grains refer as the millets devoid of the tough, indigestible husk, namely, Ragi, Jowar, and Bajra. These millets don't require processing after their harvest. They can be consumed right after cleaning. While the husked grains consist of an indigestible seed coat that has to be removed before consumption. Foxtail millets, Little millets, and Kodo millets belong to this second type.

Millets are an excellent source of Vitamin A, Vitamin B, Phosphorus, Potassium, Antioxidants, Niacin, Calcium, and Iron. And also contains 7-12% protein, 2-5% fat, 65-75% carbohydrates and 15-20% dietary fibre. Each 100 gram (g) of cooked millet contains- 3.51 g of protein, 1.3 g of dietary fiber, 44 milligrams (mg) of magnesium, 0.161 mg of copper, 100 mg of phosphorus, 0.272 mg of manganese (Anonymous 2021). Hence, they are rich in nutritions.

Millets also provide health benefits like:

1. **Control blood sugar-** Millet is low in simple carbohydrates and higher in complex carbohydrates, making it a low-glycemic index (GI) food. This means millet takes longer to digest than standard wheat flour. Low-GI foods can help keep your blood sugar from spiking after eating, which allows people with diabetes to manage their blood sugar levels more easily.
2. **Improve digestive health-** Millet is rich in dietary fiber, both soluble and insoluble. The insoluble fiber in millet is known as a "prebiotic," which means it supports good bacteria in your digestive system. This type of fiber is also important for adding bulk to stools, which helps keep you regular and reduces your risk of colon cancer.



3. **Weight loss-** The calorie content of millets is low, and they are an excellent food product for weight loss and for those who like to maintain themselves.
4. **Act as an antioxidant-** Millets help your body detox because of their antioxidant properties; Quercetin, curcumin, ellagic acid, and other valuable catechins flush out toxins from your body and neutralise the enzymatic actions of your organs.
5. **Reduce cardiovascular risk-** Millets contain essential fats, which provide our bodies with good fats which prevent excess fat storage as well as effectively lowers the risk of high cholesterol, strokes, and other heart complaints.
6. **Immunity booster-** Millets provide a great source of protein and can help develop and strengthen our immunity.

