

Health Benefits of Millets for Food Security in India

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Introduction:

Millet is one of the oldest cultivated grains in the world and has been grown throughout Africa and Southeast Asia for thousands of years. Millet can be used to make bread, beer, cereal, and other dishes. Even today, millet is a staple food around the world. In fact, millet is gaining renewed popularity because of how versatile and easy to grow it is. You can find millet in pearl, finger, proso, and sorghum varieties throughout the U.S. While these types of millet may look slightly different, they all provide similar health benefits.

SIRIDHANYA MILLET



Health Benefits:

Millet is rich in niacin, which helps your body manage more than 400 enzyme reactions. Niacin is also important for healthy skin and organ function. In fact, it's such an important compound that it's often added to processed foods to enrich them. Millet, especially the darker varieties, is also an excellent source of beta-carotene. This natural

pigment acts as both an antioxidant and as a precursor to vitamin A, helping your body fight off free radicals and supporting the health of your eyes.

- ✚ **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.
- ✚ **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.
- ✚ **Protect Your Heart:** The soluble fiber in millet can help reduce the amount of “bad” cholesterol in your blood—a risk factor for atherosclerosis. Soluble fiber turns into a gel in your stomach and absorbs cholesterol, allowing it to be safely carried out of your system. Some studies show that millet can also raise your “good” cholesterol levels and lower triglycerides. Because cholesterol is such a big risk factor for heart disease, eating millet regularly may help keep your heart healthier.

Nutritional Composition of various types of Millets with their Local Name:

Millets are high in nutrition and dietary fibre. They serve as good source of protein, micronutrients and phytochemicals. The millets contain 7-12% protein, 2-5% fat, 65-75% carbohydrates and 15-20% dietary fibre. The essential amino acid profile of the millet protein is better than various cereals such as maize. Millets contain fewer cross-linked prolamins, which may be an additional factor contributing to higher digestibility of the millet proteins. Similar to cereal proteins, the millet proteins are poor sources of lysine, but they complement well with lysine - rich vegetables (leguminous) and animal proteins which form nutritionally balanced composites of high biological value. Millets are more nutritious compared to fine cereals.

Conclusion:

Small millets are good source of phosphorous and iron. Millets contribute to antioxidant activity with phytates, polyphenols, tannins, anthocyanins, phytosterols and

pinacosanols present in it having important role in aging and metabolic diseases. All millets possess high antioxidant activities.

