



IMPORTANCE OF PEARL MILLETS (BAJRA): A REVIEW

Ayurveda

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KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION:

Millet, an ancient cereal grain. "Millet is actually a group of grasses with small seeds grown mainly in Asia and Africa. Compared to other cereal grains like wheat, rice, and corn, millet has loads of nutrition. It's also gluten-free. Millet is lower on the glycemic index (GI) than many other grains. High-fibers, low- glycemic index (GI) foods keep blood sugar steady, lower cholesterol, and help you lose weight. Based on its grain size and area under production it is categorized into 2 types, i.e., Major and minor millets.

The Pearl Millet's scientific name is *Cenchrus americanus*; it is also referred to as African Millet or Spiked Millet in different regions. Pearl Millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*), also known as Bajra, is a Cereal Crop grown in tropical Semi-arid regions of the world primarily in Africa and Asia. Bajra is well adapted to production systems characterized by low rainfall (200-600 mm), low soil fertility, and high temperature, and thus can be grown in areas where other cereal crops, such as wheat or maize, would not survive. In its traditional growing areas, pearl millet is the basic staple for households in the poorest countries and among the poorest people. It is also one of the most drought resistant crops among cereals and millets. Pearl millet is generally used as a temporary summer pasture crop or in some areas as a food crop. Pearl millet is one of the four most important cereals (rice, maize, sorghum and millets) grown in the tropics and is rich in iron and zinc, contains higher number of antioxidants and these nutrients along with the antioxidants may be beneficial for the overall health and wellbeing.

Description:

Various Ayurvedic Texts have described Pearl Millets or Sorghum in different Vargas as, Millets are included under *Kudhanya*, which is said to be a rich source of minerals and vitamin B. The pearl millets consist of golden yellow fatty oil (5.23%), α -Linoleic acid (45.6%), Oleic acid (28.5%) and Palmitic acid (20.6%); Linolenic (2.1%) and Stearic acid (1.5%) as minor fatty acids. Linolenic acid is an essential fatty acid useful in conditions of rheumatoid arthritis, cardiac arrhythmias, depression and reduces the risk of ischemic and thrombotic stroke. In Ayurveda, it is described as *Vilekhana* (Scarifying), *Baddhanisyanda* (dries up fluid in the body). The diseases which are said to be alleviated by *Bajra* are *Raktapitta* (Bleeding disorders), *Krumi* (Worm infestation), *Shula* (Abdominal pain), *Ashmari* (Calculi), *Mutrakrucchra* (Dysuria), *Raktadosha* (haematological disturbances), *Trushna* (Dyspepsia), *Kandu* (Pruritis), *Jvara* (Fever), *Vrana* (Wounds and ulcers) and *Durnama* (Hemorrhoids). Millets have therapeutic benefits such as prevention of heart diseases, diabetes, migraine and premature death. *Bajra* is consumed in the form of *Roti* in many parts of India.

Properties:

BOTANICAL NAME: *Cenchrus americanus*

SYNONYM: *Pennisetum glaucum*

FAMILY: Gramineae

VERNACULAR NAMES:

Sanskrit- Priyangu

English- Pearl Millet, Dukn, Cumbu, Gero, Sanio, Kambu, Babala,

Bulrush Millet

Hindi- Jonghariya

Marathi- Bajari

Medicinal Properties:

Rasa- Madhura, Kashaya

Veerya- Ushna

Vipaka- Katu

Gunas- Guru, Ruksha, Ushna

Karma- Ruchya, Trishnaghna, Kledaghna, Mutrajanan and Vrishya

Effect on Tridosha- Vata Prakopaka, Kapha-Pitta Shamaka

Nutritional Properties:

Nutrient	Amount
Energy	1456 KJ
Carbohydrates	61.78 gm
Protein	10.96 gm
Fat	5.43 gm
Fiber	11.49 gm

Pearl Millet has various uses in culinary preparations. Here are some common **Pearl Millet uses** that you should be aware of:

- **Flour.**
- **Porridge.**
- **Pilaf.**
- **Soups and stews.**
- **Snacks.**
- **Fermented dishes.**
- **Animal feed.**



Figure no. 1 Pear millet

Potential Uses/ Indications Of Pearl Millets:

1. Prevents Type 2 Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic disease that requires proper blood glucose regulation for good health. Incorporating Pearl millet into a balanced diet can have diabetes-preventive benefits due to its:

- **Unique composition:** Pearl millet contains beneficial carbohydrates and dietary fiber that help regulate blood glucose levels.
- **Digestible starch:** Regularly including Pearl millet in your diet can lower the risk of developing diabetes due to its slowly digestible starch.
- **Low glycemic index:** Pearl millet has a low glycemic index, causing a slower and steadier rise in blood sugar levels compared to high glycemic foods.
- **Gluten-free alternative:** If you are gluten sensitive, you can include Pearl millet, specifically in the form of Bajra roti with Methi.

2. Helps with Weight Loss

If you are aiming to lose weight, incorporating Pearl Millet, or Bajra, into your diet can be beneficial, as this is one of the most important **Pearl millet Benefits**. This millet's protein helps build muscles and heal tissues. Its high protein level makes it a good alternative for vegetarians trying to cut carbs. Including Pearl Millet in your meals

can support your weight loss goals while providing a nutritious and satisfying option.

3. Prevents Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome

Another **Pearl Millet Benefit** is that it helps prevent polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). PCOS is a prevalent hormonal disorder affecting women of all ages, from teenagers to those in menopause. This condition not only disrupts health but also impacts mood, causing fatigue and unwanted hair growth. In addition to medication, weight loss, and strict dietary control, incorporating Bajra (Pearl Millet) into the diet can be beneficial.

Pearl Millet is rich in iron and fibers, which help reduce visceral fat, particularly around the abdominal region. This, in turn, regulates the menstrual cycle and prevents associated lifestyle disorders.

4. Makes the Heart Healthy

One of the most vital **Pearl Millet Benefits** is that it makes a well-regulated diet essential for maintaining optimal heart health. Pearl Millet is packed with magnesium and potassium, which play crucial roles in dilating blood vessels and promoting improved blood circulation.

Regular consumption of this wonder millet helps reduce LDL cholesterol, preventing the formation of arterial blockages. Additionally, **Pearl Millet varieties** are rich in Omega-3 fatty acids and plant lignans, further contributing to heart health and overall well-being. Including Pearl Millet in your diet can be a valuable step towards maintaining a healthy heart.

5. Easy Digestion

Bajra aids digestion and prevents constipation, which is important for your general health. As a gluten-free cereal, it's great for Celiacs. Due to its high insoluble fiber content, Bajra might help relieve constipation when eaten regularly. This fiber adds bulk to the stool, promoting regular bowel movements and preventing digestive issues.

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