

- Diabetes

GRAINS OF GOODNESS: HEALTH KEEP SUGAR on Thursday LEVELS IN CHECK

Our diet has a key role to play in keeping blood sugar levels in control. Know about these wholesome Indian grains with low glycemic index that can curb sugar levels from spiking drastically

HT Cafe · 30 Jun 2022 · 04 · Abigail Banerji abigail.banerji@hindustantimes.com

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) recently released guidelines to treat type 1 diabetes, given that India is home to the world's second-largest adult diabetes population. "The past three decades witnessed a 150% increase in the number of people with diabetes in the country," the ICMR said while pointing out how lifestyle management plays an essential role in managing type 1 diabetes. Hence, it is necessary to incorporate food items with low glycemic index.



Glycemic index, or GI, is a number assigned to a food, which represents the relative rise in the blood glucose level two hours after consuming it. For diabetes patients, it is recommended to consume food items with a low GI, as these ensure blood sugar levels don't spike, while providing the requisite fibre and other essential nutrients to patients.

DIABETES AND COVID-19

During a presentation at the annual Scientific Sessions of the American Diabetes Association, it was stated that diabetes patients were up to four times more likely to develop long Covid-19, compared to people without diabetes. However, studies have also suggested that contracting the virus may increase the risk of developing diabetes. Hence, one must monitor sugar levels regularly.

GRAINS TO CONSUME Barley: A grain that dates back to almost 13,000 years ago, barley is a superfood that is high in fibre, both soluble and insoluble. The beta glucan fibres in it help slow down the release of sugar into the blood stream. Moreover, barley is a good source of magnesium, which is very important for diabetics, as it helps improve insulin sensitivity of cells, thereby aiding better blood sugar control.

How to consume: Go for hullless barley, which is the whole grain variety of barley. You can add it to soups, make khichdi, upma or flour for rotis and paranthas, etc. You can also have jau ka pani, which is prepared by soaking a cup of barley overnight.

Ragi: Also called nachni or finger millet, it contains high amounts of calcium, phosphorus and is gluten free, too. It is low in cholesterol and high in antioxidants, thereby helping diabetics meet their overall nutritional requirements. Ragi doesn't allow glucose to spike, but processed ragi products can be detrimental. Therefore, always opt for whole grain.

How to consume: You can have dosas or pancakes made of ragi. You can even mix it with wheat to make rotis. **Sattu:** Sattu contains beta glucan that reduces sugar levels. A low GI grain, it is packed with proteins and fibres, but is low in carbs and sodium content, meeting all the dietary requisites of a diabetic. However, sattu can cause gas and bloating, if consumed in high quantities. Those suffering from gall bladder ailments or kidney stones must avoid Bengal gram sattu.

How to consume: Sattu can be incorporated into paranthas, chillas and protein shakes, too. **Bulgur wheat:** Also known as couscous or daliya, this is a grain that is excellent for those with diabetes. In addition to being low in cholesterol and salt while being high in fibre, bulgur wheat is an excellent source of iron and vitamin B.

How to consume: Upma, pulao, khichdi made with daliya make for a wholesome meal. You can also add to salads and soups.

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