

The Uses of Cucumber in Ayurveda

Cucumber, called *Trapusha* in Sanskrit (*Khira* in Hindi, *Shasha* in Bengali and *Vellarikka* in Tamil) is widely used in Ayurvedic treatment for difficulty in urination, excessive thirst, headache and insomnia. It holds good promise in liver cancer treatment.

As a creeper found in the wild and also abundantly cultivated all over India, it is used as a vegetable. The cucumber is pale green in colour with many seeds inside, which point at both the ends.



Cucumber contains proteolytic enzymes and ascorbic acid oxidase. Its skin is rich in vitamin A and C, and hence it is a very good anti-oxidant. The skin also contains folic acid.

Several Uses

- The juice of cucumber is consumed to relieve skin burnings.
- The seeds are added with water and drunk to relieve thirst.
- The powder of the dried seeds of cucumber is taken in a dose of 3-5 g to relieve general weakness of the muscles.
- Medicated oil prepared using seeds of cucumber, or even slices of cucumber, are applied over the scalp to get relief from disturbed sleep, headache.
- Cucumber slices are given along with boiled rice or rice gruel in the morning to treat urinary tract infections and calculi.
- Externally applied, cucumber soothes and moisturizes the skin and relieves burning sensation of skin and eyes. Hence it is used in sunburn.

Sushruta Samhita, the ayurvedic treatise, mentions that cucumber is *sheetala* (coolant), *mutrala* (diuretic) and *basti shodhana* (cleanses urinary bladder).

It may cause constipation. It is not ideal to consume in rainy season. *Pandu*, pale, ripe cucumber is *kaphakrut*, increases *kapha dosha*. Cucumber is best avoided during cold and cough, since as a natural coolant it could worsen the symptoms.

Research studies have revealed that cucumber has strong anti-cancer properties, especially treatment of liver cancer.

The aqueous fruit pulp extract of cucumber administered orally at three different doses produces significant laxative activity.

It is safe to use during pregnancy, lactation period and in children 🍷

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