



Mini Review Paper

Medicinal Properties of Lime and its Traditional Food Value

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Abstract

Lime is having tremendous importance in our diet and regular feeding habits due to its enormous nutritional and natural medicinal benefits from ancient time in India. It keeps away many diseases, improves resistance to diseases and provides long term profits by purifying blood in the body system naturally.

Key words: Lime, medicinal.

Introduction

Lime belongs to the group of citrus fruits. It finds an important place in our daily meals as a valuable adjunct. It enhances the health and is regarded a highly valued fruit. Lime is smaller than lemon and have less quantity of juice in them. Their skin is greenish, thin and smooth. It is a rich source of Vitamin C and bears a sweet aroma¹. Lime tree is small in height and multi-branched with spiny branches and smaller green leaves.

Lime has various types which differ in color, size and shape. Lime is broadly classified into sweet and acid limes. Acid limes have the medicinal property in them and so find importance in our regular meals. The most popular varieties of lime in India are *Pari* and *Kagzi niboo*.

Distribution: India is regarded as the place of origin of lime. It is grown extensively throughout the tropics. Mainly the acid citrus species are in major cultivation trend.

Nutritional Value and Health Benefits

Limes are acidic in nature and serve as rich source of vitamin C, citric acid, sugar, certain minerals like calcium and phosphorus. The content of Vitamin C is more in lime than in lemon. It finds its importance for its acidic sour juice which is preferred for ingestion along with water. It is also an additive with salads for imparting tart flavor and in retention of the normal color of fruits.

Medicinal and importance in indigenous medicine

Fresh lime juice possess medicinal property which is well known from ancient ages in India. It is also called as sacred fruit in the *Vedas*. Sharangdhara and Charaka. The latter two famous physicians of ancient India had used the lime juice for alleviating orthopedic ailments therapeutically.

The vitamin C as a primary component of the lime juice increases the resistance of individuals to several diseases, helps

in wound healing and increases the health of eyes. It improves the maintenance of good dentition and keeps away toothache, dental caries, swollen gums, fragility of bones and bleeding of the gums¹.

Lime is vital in the treatment of gastric disorders like indigestion, constipation and peptic ulcer. It stops the occurrence of indigestion, burning in the chest due to high acidity in the stomach, abrupt bilious vomiting and excessive accumulation of saliva in the mouth. Lime juice with a pinch of soda bicarb mixed in water improves indigestion and gastric upset due to severe acidity after heavy rich/ spicy meals. It can also be used as carminative in indigestion and sedation is produced by release of carbonic acid and gas. In chronic constipation by promoting biliary secretion from the liver, it improves intestinal motility².

The acidic juice of lime facilitates the lipid and alcohol absorption and neutralizes excessive bile produced by the liver. The juice reduces gastric acidity by counteracting with the effects of greasy food. It is, therefore, useful in the treatment of peptic ulcers.

Acidic juice of the fruit acts as curative for tonsillitis. Oral ingestion of lime juice mixed with salt in water provides relief from burning sensation and also stops bleeding in cystitis (inflammation of urinary bladder)².

It is also a recommended therapy in weight reduction and in obesity. During mornings at empty stomach, lime juice with honey in lukewarm water to be ingested for 2-3 months for effective weight reduction. Of course, low calorie diet is also a must along with this.

Drawbacks

However, excessive ingestion of acid juice of lime develops renal calculi in long run by neutralizing and precipitating free

uric acid. The teeth enamel is also adversely affected by too much sucking of fresh lime.

Conclusion

In common Indian household cooking practices, the lime juice is often mixed as a valuable adjunct with soups, sauces, gravies and cooked pulses to make them more tasty and palatable. Its immense medicinal and pharmaceutical importance provides a

boost towards its implication as an integral nutritional supplement in Indian cuisines.

References

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