

6 Impressive Health Benefits of *Gymnema Sylvestre*



Written by Amy Goodson, MS, RD, CSSD, LD — [Updated on July 14, 2023](#)

The *Gymnema sylvestre* plant offers numerous health benefits. For example, it may help you fight sugar cravings and lower high blood sugar levels. It may also help fight inflammation, aid weight loss, and lower “bad” LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

Gymnema sylvestre is a woody climbing shrub that’s native to the tropical forests of India, Africa and Australia.

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It has been a traditional remedy for various ailments, including diabetes, malaria and snakebites (1[✓]).

This herb is thought to inhibit sugar absorption and thus has become a popular study subject in Western medicine.

Here are 6 impressive health benefits of *Gymnema sylvestre*.

1. Reduces Sugar Cravings by Making Sweet Foods Taste Less Appealing



Gymnema sylvestre can help [reduce sugar cravings](#).

One of the primary active components in this plant is gymnemic acid, which helps suppress sweetness ([1](#), [2](#)).

When consumed prior to a sugary food or beverage, gymnemic acid blocks the sugar receptors on your taste buds ([1](#)).

Research shows that *Gymnema sylvestre* extracts can reduce the ability to taste sweetness and thus make sweet foods less appealing ([1](#), [2](#)).

In a study in fasted individuals, half were given *Gymnema* extract. Those who received the supplement had less appetite for sweet foods at a subsequent meal and were more likely to limit their food intake, compared to those not taking the extract ([2](#)).

SUMMARY

Gymnemic acids in *Gymnema sylvestre* can block the sugar receptors on your tongue, decreasing your ability to taste sweetness. This can lead to reduced sugar cravings.

2. Helps Lower Blood Sugar Levels

According to the World Health Organization, more than 420 million people worldwide have diabetes, and this number is expected to increase (3 ✓).

Diabetes is a metabolic disease characterized by high blood sugar levels. It's caused by the inability of your body to produce or use insulin effectively.

Gymnema sylvestre is considered to have anti-diabetic properties.

As a supplement, it has been used in combination with other diabetes medications to lower blood sugar. It's also called gurmar, which is Hindi for "destroyer of sugar" (4 ✓).

Similar to its effects on your taste buds, *Gymnema sylvestre* can also block receptors in your intestines and thus sugar absorption, lowering your post-meal blood sugar levels.

Scientific proof of *Gymnema's* ability to lower blood sugar is insufficient to recommend it as a stand-alone diabetes medication. However, research shows strong potential.

Studies suggest that consuming 200–400 mg of gymnemic acid reduces the intestinal absorption of the sugar glucose (4 ✓).

In one study, *Gymnema* appeared to improve blood sugar control in people with type 2 diabetes by lowering blood sugar levels (5).

The study concluded that reducing blood sugar after a meal resulted in a decrease in average blood sugar levels over time. This could help decrease long-term complications of diabetes (5).

For people with high blood sugar or a high HbA1c, *Gymnema sylvestre* can help reduce fasting, post-meal and long-term blood sugar levels. However, if you're taking blood-sugar-lowering medications, consult with your doctor first.

SUMMARY

Gymnema sylvestre has anti-diabetic properties and may lower your blood sugar levels after a meal.

3. May Contribute to Favorable Insulin Levels by Increasing Insulin Production

Gymnema's role in insulin secretion and cell regeneration may also contribute to its blood-sugar-lowering capabilities.

Higher insulin levels mean that sugar is cleared from your blood at a faster rate.

If you have prediabetes or type 2 diabetes, your body tends to not make enough insulin, or your cells become less sensitive to it over time. This results in consistently high blood sugar levels.

Gymnema sylvestre may stimulate insulin production in your pancreas, promoting the regeneration of insulin-producing islet cells. This can help lower your blood sugar levels (6[✓], 7[✓]).

Many traditional drugs help increase insulin secretion and [sensitivity](#). However, herbal therapies are gaining momentum in drug development.

Interestingly, metformin, the first anti-diabetic drug, was an herbal formulation isolated from *Galega officinalis* (8[✓]).

SUMMARY

Gymnema sylvestre appears to contribute to favorable insulin levels by increasing insulin production and regenerating insulin-secreting islet cells. Both can help lower blood sugar levels.

4. Improves Cholesterol and Triglyceride Levels, Reducing Heart Disease Risk

Gymnema sylvestre may help lower “bad” LDL cholesterol levels and triglycerides.

While *Gymnema* gets its fame from lowering blood sugar levels and reducing sugar cravings, research shows that it may also influence fat absorption and lipid levels.

In one study in rats on a high-fat diet, *Gymnema* extract aided weight maintenance and suppressed the accumulation of liver fats. Also, animals fed the extract and a normal-fat diet experienced [lower triglyceride levels \(9\)](#).

Another study found that *Gymnema* extract had an anti-obesity effect on animals fed a high-fat diet. It also decreased blood fat and “bad” LDL cholesterol levels [\(10\)](#).

In addition, a study in moderately-obese people showed that *Gymnema* extract decreased triglycerides and bad “LDL” cholesterol by 20.2% and 19%, respectively. What’s more, it increased “good” HDL cholesterol levels by 22% [\(11\)](#).

High levels of “bad” LDL cholesterol and triglycerides are risk factors for heart disease.

Therefore, the positive effects of *Gymnema sylvestre* on LDL and triglycerides levels may contribute to a lower risk of heart conditions [\(6\)](#), [8](#).

SUMMARY

Research supports that *Gymnema* can play a role in lowering “bad” LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels, which can decrease your risk of heart disease.

5. May Aid Weight Loss

Gymnema sylvestre extracts have been shown to [aid weight loss](#) in animals and humans.

One three-week study showed reduced body weight in rats given a water extract of *Gymnema sylvestre*. In another study, rats on a high-fat diet that were fed a *Gymnema* extract gained less weight ([10](#) , [12](#)).

What’s more, a study in 60 moderately-obese people taking a *Gymnema* extract found a 5–6% decrease in body weight, as well as reduced food intake ([11](#) )

By blocking sweet receptors on your taste buds, *Gymnema sylvestre* may cause you to eat fewer sweet foods and consume fewer calories.

A consistent calorie deficit can result in weight loss.

SUMMARY

Gymnema sylvestre may play a role in weight loss and prevent weight gain. It may promote reduced calorie intake.

6. Helps Reduce Inflammation Due to Its Tannin and Saponin Content

Inflammation plays an important role in your body's healing process.

Some inflammation is good, such as when it helps protect your body from harmful organisms in cases of injury or infection.

Other times, inflammation may be caused by the environment or the [foods you eat](#).

However, chronic low-grade inflammation can contribute to various health issues ([13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#)).

Studies have confirmed the link between excessive sugar intake and increased inflammatory markers in animals and humans ([17](#), [18](#), [19](#)).

The ability of *Gymnema sylvestre* to reduce sugar absorption in your intestines may also allow it to decrease inflammation caused by [excess sugar intake](#).

What's more, *Gymnema* appears to have anti-inflammatory properties of its own. This is thought to be due to its content of tannins and saponins, which are beneficial plant compounds.

Gymnema sylvestre leaves are considered immunostimulatory, meaning they can regulate the immune system, reducing inflammation ([8](#)).

People with diabetes not only suffer from high blood sugar and insulin resistance but may also have decreased antioxidant levels, which can contribute to inflammation ([6](#)).

Due to its anti-inflammatory properties, *Gymnema sylvestre* can help those with diabetes and high blood sugar in a variety of ways, including by fighting inflammation.

SUMMARY

The tannins and saponins in *Gymnema* have anti-inflammatory properties that help fight inflammation.

Dosage, Safety and Side Effects

Gymnema sylvestre is traditionally consumed as a tea or by chewing its leaves.

In Western medicine, it's typically taken in pill or tablet form, making it easier to control and monitor dosage. It can also be ingested in extract or leaf powder form.

Dosage

The recommended dosage for *Gymnema sylvestre* depends on the form in which you consume it (20[✓], 21):

- **Tea:** Boil leaves for 5 minutes, then let steep for 10–15 minutes before drinking.
- **Powder:** Start with 2 grams, increasing to 4 grams if no side effects occur.
- **Capsule:** 100 mg, 3–4 times daily.

If you're looking to use *Gymnema sylvestre* as a way to block the sugar receptors on your tongue, take a supplement with water 5–10 minutes before a high-sugar meal or snack.

Safety Information

Gymnema sylvestre is considered safe for most people, but it should not be taken by children or women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning to get pregnant.

Moreover, though it appears to improve blood sugar and insulin levels, it's not a substitute for diabetes medication. Only take *Gymnema* with other blood-sugar-lowering medications under your doctor's supervision (8[✓], 21, 22[✓]).

Possible Side Effects

While its effects on blood sugar are rather positive, combining *Gymnema sylvestre* with other blood-sugar-lowering medications can cause an unsafe drop in your blood sugar levels (22[✓]).

This can cause side effects, such as headache, nausea, lightheadedness, shakiness and dizziness.

Gymnema sylvestre supplements should not be taken at the same time as blood-sugar-lowering medications, including insulin injections. Be sure to talk to your doctor about the best timing for taking this supplement (21).

Additionally, the supplement should not be taken with aspirin or the herb [St. John's Wort](#), as this may increase *Gymnema's* blood-sugar-lowering effects.

Lastly, those with milkweed allergies may also experience unpleasant side effects.

Always talk to your doctor before taking any herbal supplements.

SUMMARY

Gymnema is considered safe for most, but children or women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning to get pregnant

should not take it. People on blood-sugar-lowering medications should consult with a doctor first.

The Bottom Line

Gymnema sylvestre may help you [fight sugar cravings](#) and lower high blood sugar levels.

The plant may also play a beneficial role in diabetes treatment, as it may help stimulate insulin secretion and the regeneration of pancreas islet cells — both of which can help lower blood sugar.

In addition, *Gymnema* may fight inflammation, aid weight loss and lower “bad” LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

Though it’s safe for most, talk to your doctor first, particularly if you intend to take the supplement in combination with other medications.

All in all, if sugar is one of your vices, you could try a cup of *Gymnema sylvestre* tea to help you reduce your intake.

How we reviewed this article:

[HISTORY](#)

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