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Moringa Oil Benefits and Uses



Medically reviewed by [Cynthia Cobb, DNP, APRN, WHNP-BC, FAANP](#) —
Written by [Corey Whelan](#) on December 13, 2019

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What is moringa oil?

Moringa oil is derived from the seeds of *Moringa oleifera*, a small tree native to the Himalayan mountains. Virtually all parts of the moringa tree, including its seeds, roots, bark, flowers, and leaves, can be used for nutritional, industrial, or medicinal purposes.

For this reason, it's sometimes referred to as "the miracle tree." It's also called the drumstick tree, in reference to the shape of its seed pods.

Moringa seeds have a high oil content and contain many nutritional compounds, including monounsaturated fats, protein, sterols, and tocopherols. Moringa oil is produced through a variety of industrial processes, including solvent extraction and cold-pressing.

It's available as an essential oil and as a cooking oil. It's also an ingredient in hair and skin products.

Moringa oil uses and benefits

Moringa oil has been used as a medicinal folk cure and as a topical, cosmetic ingredient since ancient times. Today, moringa oil is manufactured for a wide range of personal and industrial uses.

- **Cooking oil.** Moringa oil is high in protein and oleic acid, a [monounsaturated](#), healthy fat. When used for cooking, it's an economical, nutritious alternative to more expensive oils. It's becoming a widespread nutritional staple in food-insecure areas where moringa trees are grown.
- **Topical cleanser and moisturizer.** Moringa oil's oleic acid makes it beneficial when used topically as a cleansing agent, and as a moisturizer for skin and hair.
- **Cholesterol management.** Edible moringa oil contains sterols, which have been [shown](#)  to lower LDL or "bad" cholesterol.

- **Antioxidant.** Beta-sitosterol, a phytosterol found in moringa oil, may have antioxidant and antidiabetic benefits, although more research is needed to confirm this.
- **Anti-inflammatory.** Moringa oil contains several bioactive compounds which have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, both when ingested and used topically. This may make moringa oil beneficial for acne breakouts. These compounds include tocopherols, catechins, quercetin, ferulic acid, and zeatin.

Moringa oil products

Moringa oil can be found as:

- Cooking oil to be used in frying and baking.
- Essential oil to be used topically on skin and hair. Always dilute any essential oil with a carrier oil before using.
- An ingredient in skin and hair care products, such as soap, liquid cleanser, hydrating toner, massage oil, shampoo, and hair conditioner.

Tips on choosing moringa oil

Moringa oil is sometimes referred to as behen oil, or ben oil, because of its behenic acid content.

- **Determine if it's a carrier oil or essential oil.** Always look to see if the oil you're purchasing is a carrier oil or an essential oil. As with any essential oil, moringa essential oil should be mixed with a carrier oil before using topically. Moringa essential oil may not be edible and should not be taken internally.
- **Choose cold-pressed, food grade oil for cooking.** Some forms of moringa oil are manufactured in large batches via solvent extraction, to be used as fuel or as a machinery lubricant. If you plan to use moringa oil for cooking or topically on skin, look for an oil that is cold-pressed, organic, and labeled for those purposes.

- **Check how it's manufactured.** Also look for a manufacturer that's transparent about the sourcing and production of its product.
- **Look at the oil color and clarity.** Look for an oil that is pale yellow in color with a slight scent of peanut. Some bottled brands may contain little-to-no moringa oil.

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Moringa oil for hair and skin

There are commercially-produced products, such as [Herbal Essences Golden Moringa Oil](#) for hair, that may provide easy-to-access benefits.

You can also create a skin or hair care oil treatment with moringa essential oil.

For hair

Ingredients

- 2 cups of a carrier oil, such as [almond oil](#), that has moisturizing properties
- 5 to 10 drops of moringa oil
- 5 to 10 drops of a beneficial essential oil, such as [lavender](#) or [tea tree oil](#)

Shop for moringa oil [online](#).

Directions

- Mix the oils together in a glass bowl or bottle.
- Apply to the hair, massaging into the roots.
- Cover hair, and leave on overnight.
- Shampoo and condition hair as usual.
- You can also heat this mixture for a few seconds in a microwave, prior to applying. Some people like the heightened scent that heating gives the oils.

For skin

Directions

- Use the same ingredients as the hair treatment. Try experimenting with different carrier oils and essential oils to vary the scent.
- Massage gently into your skin on the face or the body.
- Tissue off any excess.

Moringa oil has a relatively long shelf life up to about 1 year. However, you should store any oil blend in glass at room temperature, in a dark space, to prevent it from going rancid.

Moringa leaves vs. oil

The entire moringa tree is used for various purposes. Keep in mind that moringa oil comes solely from its seeds, not from its leaves or flowers.

Some purported benefits of moringa may not be derived from the oil, but from other forms, such as leaf powder.

For example, [some evidence](#)  suggests moringa leaves may be beneficial for diabetes control. The leaves [may also contain](#)  antibacterial properties.

Ingestion of the bark, leaves, and flowers of the moringa tree can generate uterine contractions severe enough to cause a miscarriage. Moringa oil has not been linked to this risk. However, it's important to

discuss the use of moringa oil with your doctor, especially while trying to conceive and during pregnancy.

The takeaway

Food-grade moringa oil is a healthy, monounsaturated fat that's high in protein and other compounds. As an essential oil, moringa has benefits for moisturizing and cleansing the skin. It can also be used for acne and as a moisturizing hair treatment.

Well Tested: Moringa and Castor Oils

Health Benefits and Uses of Moringa and Castor...

Learn about the benefits of moringa oil and castor oil in this short video.



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6 Science-Based Health Benefits of *Moringa oleifera*



Written by Atli Arnarson BSc, PhD — Updated on February 6, 2023

Moringa oleifera is a plant that may offer health benefits, including reducing your risk of certain health conditions like high blood pressure.

Moringa oleifera is a plant that has been praised for its health benefits for thousands of years.

It is very rich in healthy antioxidants and bioactive plant compounds.

So far, scientists have only investigated a fraction of the many reputed health benefits.

Here are 6 health benefits of *Moringa oleifera* that are supported by scientific research.

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1. *Moringa oleifera* is very nutritious

Moringa oleifera is a fairly large tree native to North India.

It goes by a variety of names, such as drumstick tree, horseradish tree or ben oil tree.

Almost all parts of the tree are eaten or used as ingredients in traditional herbal medicines.

This especially applies to the leaves and pods, which are commonly eaten in parts of India and Africa (1[✓]).

Below is a photo of *Moringa oleifera* leaves, powder and capsules:



Moringa leaves are an excellent source of many vitamins and minerals. One cup of fresh, chopped leaves (21 grams) contains (2[✓]):

- **Protein:** 2 grams
- **Vitamin B6:** 19% of the RDA
- **Vitamin C:** 12% of the RDA
- **Iron:** 11% of the RDA
- **Riboflavin (B2):** 11% of the RDA
- **Vitamin A (from beta-carotene):** 9% of the RDA
- **Magnesium:** 8% of the RDA

In Western countries, the dried leaves are sold as dietary supplements, either in powder or capsule form.

Compared to the leaves, the pods are generally lower in vitamins and minerals. However, they are exceptionally rich in vitamin C. One cup of fresh, sliced pods (100 grams) contains 157% of your daily requirement.

The diet of people in developing nations sometimes lacks vitamins, minerals and protein. In these countries, *Moringa oleifera* can be an important source of many essential nutrients.

However, there is one downside: Moringa leaves may also contain high levels of [antinutrients](#), which can reduce the absorption of minerals and protein ([3](#), [4](#)).

Another thing to keep in mind is that taking *Moringa oleifera* supplements in capsules won't supply a large number of nutrients.

The amounts are negligible compared to what you consume if you eat a balanced diet based on whole foods.

SUMMARY

Moringa leaves are rich in many important nutrients, including protein, vitamin B6, vitamin C, riboflavin and iron.

2. Moringa oleifera is rich in antioxidants

Antioxidants are compounds that act against free radicals in your body.

High levels of free radicals may cause oxidative stress, which is associated with chronic diseases like heart disease and type 2 diabetes ([5](#), [6](#)).

Several antioxidant plant compounds have been found in the leaves of *Moringa oleifera* ([7](#), [8](#), [9](#)).

In addition to vitamin C and beta-carotene, these include ([10](#), [11](#)):

- **Quercetin:** This powerful antioxidant may help lower blood pressure (12 ✓, 13 ✓).
- **Chlorogenic acid:** Also found in high amounts in coffee, chlorogenic acid may help moderate blood sugar levels after meals (14 ✓, 15 ✓).

One study in women found that taking 1.5 teaspoons (7 grams) of moringa leaf powder every day for three months significantly increased blood antioxidant levels (16).

Moringa leaf extract may also be used as a food preservative. It increases the shelf life of meat by reducing oxidation (17).

SUMMARY

Moringa oleifera is rich in various antioxidants, including quercetin and chlorogenic acid. Moringa leaf powder can increase blood antioxidant levels.

3. Moringa may lower blood sugar levels

High blood sugar can be a serious health problem. In fact, it's the main characteristic of diabetes.

Over time, high blood sugar levels raise the risk of many serious health problems, including heart disease. For this reason, it's important to keep your blood sugar within healthy limits.

Interestingly, several studies have shown that *Moringa oleifera* may help lower blood sugar levels.

However, most of the evidence is based on animal studies. Only a few human-based studies exist, and they're generally of low quality (18 ✓, 19 ✓, 20 ✓).

One study in 30 women showed that taking 1.5 teaspoons (7 grams) of moringa leaf powder every day for three months reduced fasting blood sugar levels by 13.5%, on average (16).

Another small study in six people with diabetes found that adding 50 grams of moringa leaves to a meal reduced the rise in blood sugar by 21% (21).

Scientists believe these effects are caused by plant compounds such as isothiocyanates (22 ✓).

SUMMARY

Moringa leaves may lead to reduced blood sugar levels, but more research is needed before any solid recommendations can be made.

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4. Moringa oleifera may reduce inflammation

Inflammation is the body's natural response to infection or injury.

It's an essential protective mechanism but may become a major health issue if it continues over a long period of time.

In fact, sustained inflammation is linked to many chronic health problems, including heart disease and cancer (23[✓], 24[✓]).

Most whole fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices have [anti-inflammatory properties](#). However, the degree to which they can help depends on the types and amounts of anti-inflammatory compounds they contain.

Scientists believe that isothiocyanates are the main anti-inflammatory compounds in moringa leaves, pods and seeds (25, 26[✓], 27[✓]).

But so far, research has been limited to test-tube and animal studies. It remains to be seen if *Moringa oleifera* has similar anti-inflammatory effects in humans.

SUMMARY

In animal and test-tube studies, *Moringa oleifera* has been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties. This effect has not been studied in humans.

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5. Moringa can lower cholesterol

Having high cholesterol has been linked to an increased risk of heart disease.

Fortunately, many plant foods can effectively [reduce cholesterol](#). These include flaxseeds, oats and almonds.

Both animal- and human-based studies have shown that *Moringa oleifera* may have similar cholesterol-lowering effects ([7](#)[✓], [18](#)[✓], [28](#)[✓], [29](#)[✓]).

SUMMARY

Moringa oleifera can lower your cholesterol levels, potentially reducing the risk of heart disease.

6. *Moringa oleifera* may protect against arsenic toxicity

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over time.

For instance, studies have linked long-term exposure to an increased risk of cancer and heart disease (31[✓], 32[✓]).

Interestingly, several studies in mice and rats have shown that the leaves and seeds of *Moringa oleifera* may protect against some of the effects of arsenic toxicity (33[✓], 34[✓], 35).

These results are promising, but it's not yet known whether this also applies to humans.

SUMMARY

Animal studies suggest that *Moringa oleifera* may protect against arsenic toxicity. However, this has not yet been studied in humans.

The bottom line

Moringa oleifera is an Indian tree that has been used in traditional medicine for thousands of years.

However, only a few of its many reputed health benefits have been studied scientifically (1[✓]).

To date, studies show that *Moringa oleifera* may lead to modest reductions in blood sugar and cholesterol. It may also have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects and protect against arsenic toxicity.

Moringa leaves are also highly nutritious and should be beneficial for people who are lacking in essential nutrients.

If you want to try *Moringa oleifera* supplements, there is an excellent selection [available on Amazon](#).

Well tested: Moringa and castor oils



How we reviewed this article:

HISTORY

Our experts continually monitor the health and wellness space, and we update our articles when new information becomes available.

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