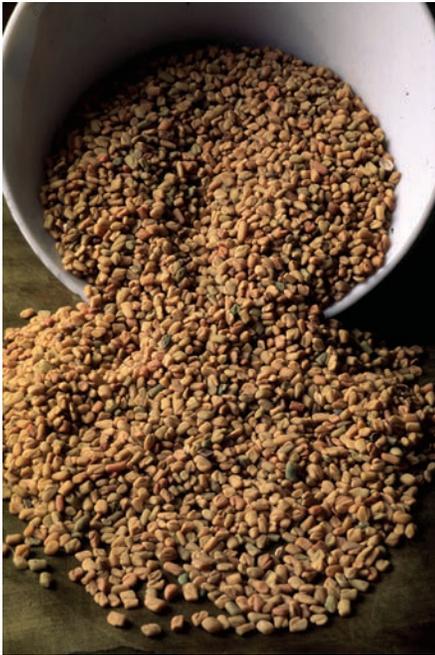


herbs at a glance

Fenugreek



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This fact sheet provides basic information about fenugreek—common names, what the science says, potential side effects and cautions, and resources for more information.

Common Names—fenugreek, fenugreek seed

Latin Name—*Trigonella foenum-graecum*

The first recorded use of fenugreek is described on an ancient Egyptian papyrus dated to 1500 B.C. Fenugreek seed is commonly used in cooking. Historically, fenugreek was used for a variety of health conditions, including menopausal symptoms and digestive problems. It was also used for inducing childbirth. Today, fenugreek is used as a folk or traditional remedy for diabetes and loss of appetite, and to stimulate milk production in breastfeeding women. It is also applied to the skin for inflammation.

The dried seeds are ground and taken by mouth or used to form a paste that is applied to the skin.

What the Science Says

- A few small studies have found that fenugreek may help lower blood sugar levels in people with diabetes.
- There is not enough scientific evidence to support the use of fenugreek for any other health condition.

Side Effects and Cautions

- Possible side effects of fenugreek when taken by mouth include gas, bloating, and diarrhea. Fenugreek can cause irritation when applied to the skin.
- Given its historical use for inducing childbirth, women should use caution when taking fenugreek during pregnancy.
- Tell all your health care providers about any complementary health practices you use. Give them a full picture of what you do to manage your health. This will help ensure coordinated and safe care. For tips about talking with your health care providers about complementary and alternative medicine, see NCCAM's Time to Talk campaign at nccam.nih.gov/timetotalk/.

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For More Information

Visit the NCCAM Web site at nccam.nih.gov and view *Using Dietary Supplements Wisely* (nccam.nih.gov/health/supplements/wiseuse.htm).

NCCAM Clearinghouse

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