

## **The Amazing Gymnema Sylvestre**



This unassuming woody climbing plant, native to the lush tropical regions of India, has bitter leaves, dubbed "sugar destroyers". These leaves can actually eliminate the ability to taste sugar in your mouth, thereby reducing your cravings for sugar. Gymnema Sylvestre has shown promising results in safely controlling blood sugar levels in diabetics, while helping with weight loss, hypoglycaemia, high cholesterol, anaemia and digestion problems.

Gymnema Sylvestre has been used in folk, ayurvedic and homeopathic systems of medicine since ancient times. It is regarded as a plant with potent anti-diabetic properties. It is also used in the treatment of asthma, eye complaints, inflammations, family planning and snakebite. According to a report in the Journal of Clinical Biochemistry and Nutrition, Gymnema possesses antimicrobial, antihypercholesterolemic, hepatoprotective and sweet suppressing activities.

### **How Does Gymnema Sylvestre Work?**

Recent pharmacological and clinical studies have shown that Gymnema Sylvestre acts on two sites, the taste buds in the oral cavity and the absorptive surface to the intestines. This herbal remedy works via gymnemic acid, its active ingredient. Gymnemic acid molecules have a unique shape that are similar to glucose, meaning they are able to fill cell receptors in the lining of the intestines, preventing uptake of sugar molecules and resulting in lower blood sugar levels

Because gymnemic acid and Gymnema leaf extract interfere with the ability of your taste buds to taste sweet or bitter. By inhibiting this ability, people taking it will limit their intake of sweets, which further helps blood sugar levels.

#### **Taste Sense for Sweetness:**

The gurmarin constituent in Gymnema is known to selectively suppress the sucrose responses of the chorda tympani nerve in rats and mice. In addition, saliva contains gurmarin binding proteins. Reduced preference for sucrose in animals on gymnemic acid regimen is probably caused by gurmarin. Subsequent restoring of sucrose preference may be due to "suppression of the effect of gurmarin by salivary gurmarin-binding proteins induced by the Gymnema diet" used during these studies.

#### **Cholesterol:**

Saponin constituents of plants are well known for their ability to increase faecal excretion of cholesterol and other neutral steroids. The saponins of Gymnema are no exception. In a dose dependent manner, extracts increase faecal excretion of cholesterol, total neutral steroids, and bile acids in rats.

#### **Lipid Absorption:**

Gymnemic acid strongly inhibits the absorption of oleic acid from the intestines of rats in a dose-dependent, reversible fashion. This effect is similar to Gymnema's effect on glucose absorption. The glycosides do not have this effect. These effects may help to clarify the clinical application of Gymnema to diabetes and obesity.

Extracts applied to taste buds on the tongue effectively neutralizes the gustatory stimuli to the brain for the taste quality of sweetness.

Gymnemic acids also appear to work, according to the Journal of Clinical Biochemistry and Nutrition, because they:

- Increase secretion of insulin
- Promote regeneration of islet cells (islet cells are insulin-producing cells in your pancreas)
- Increase utilization of glucose
- Inhibit glucose absorption from the intestine

Gymnema suppresses glucose absorption and reduces the sensation of sweetness in foods - effects which are important for individuals who want to reduce blood sugar levels or lose weight - especially in terms of appetite control and food cravings.

### **Gymnema Therapeutic Uses**

- Suppresses the taste of sweet foods, and consequently the desire to eat
- Reduces the metabolic effect of sugar by preventing the intestines from absorbing sugar molecules during digestion
- Treatment of diabetes
- Snakebite, treated by powder or paste of the root applied to the wound
- Fever, treated with oral administration of half announce to an ounce (one part in 10) of leaves
- Swollen glands, treated with an external application of triturated leaves mixed with castor oil
- Gymnema helps to normal blood sugar
- Gymnema controls sugar level
- Gymnema controls and regulate weight
- Gymnema controls sugar craving
- Gymnema reduces the taste of sugar when it is on the mouth
- Gymnema curb sweet tooth
- Gymnema for blood glucose
- Gymnema for Cholesterol
- Gymnema is the natural way to help control blood sugar
- Gymnema neutralized the craving for sweets by abolishing the taste of sugar
- Gymnema promotes regeneration of beta cells responsible for releasing insulin in the pancreas
- Gymnema prevents adrenaline from stimulating the liver to produce glucose
- Gymnema lowers serum cholesterol and triglycerides

### **Toxicity Cautions and Contraindications**

For most people using Gymnema Sylvestre, blood sugar goes down toward but not below normal blood sugar levels. This can happen in a small number of patients, however, because the mechanisms of the diabetic syndrome vary with different patients. Remarkably, unlike insulin or oral hypoglycaemic sulfonylurea compounds, the hypoglycaemic effects of Gymnema Sylvestre are seen in only a small percentage of diabetic patients.

### **Safety of Gymnema Sylvestre**

The safety of *Gymnema Sylvestre* has been demonstrated by the fact that it has been safely and successfully used for more than 2,000 years in traditional Ayurvedic medicine.

### **Is *Gymnema* addictive?**

*Gymnema* does not contain any addictive components and can be taken without fear of addiction for extended periods of time.

### **Does *Gymnema* have any Side Effects?**

No side effects have been reported, but researchers have not established whether this herb is absolutely safe for pregnant women or during lactation.

*Gymnema* be taken along with other pharmaceutical medication or alternative health products. It is advisable to use caution when taking *Gymnema* along with other pharmaceutical medication (oral hypoglycaemics or insulin) for diabetes. The combination of *Gymnema* and these medications can lower blood-sugar levels to potentially risky levels. If you are already taking diabetes medication, it is extremely important to work with a physician before supplementing with *Gymnema* because the physician needs to closely monitor blood-sugar levels. In many instances, your doctor will need to lower the dosage of the pharmaceutical medication you are on.

### ***Gymnema's* action on the body**

*Gymnema* has the ability to lower blood sugar levels, improve the body's ability to metabolize and respond to insulin and regenerate the pancreas, although results depend on how advanced the condition is the extent to which medical management and monitoring is essential. *Gymnema* decreases insulin needs by 45-75% and helps lower blood sugar and triglycerides. Further, *Gymnema* reduces craving for sugar and blocks the ability to taste sweets for 3 hours, although it does not completely destroy all sense of taste. In type II diabetes, *Gymnema* improves insulin's effects and can even substitute for oral sugar-lowering drugs