Fruits of medicinal importance

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Abstract

Fruits and vegetable are universally promoted as healthy. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 recommend you make one-half of your plate fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables include a diverse group of plant foods that vary greatly in content of energy and nutrients. Fruits and vegetables also supply vitamins and minerals to the diet and are sources of phytochemicals that function as antioxidants, phytoestrogens, and antiinflammatory agents and through other protective mechanisms. Non communicable diseases (NCDs), especially cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), cancer, obesity and type 2 diabetes mellitus, currently kill more people every year than any other cause of death. Four factors in the epidemiology of these diseases – poor diet, physical inactivity, tobacco and alcohol use – are of overwhelming importance to public health. Fruit and vegetables are an important component of a healthy diet and, if consumed daily in sufficient amounts, could help prevent major diseases such as CVDs and certain cancers. Diets high in fruits and vegetables are widely recommended for their health-promoting properties. Fruits and vegetables have historically held a place in dietary guidance because of their concentrations of vitamins, especially vitamins C and A; minerals, especially electrolytes; and more recently phytochemicals, especially antioxidants. Additionally, fruits and vegetables are recommended as a source of dietary fiber. In this article, medicinal properties of some fruits have been discussed.

Keywords: Fruits, medicinal importance, health, Unani

Introduction

Non communicable diseases (NCDs), especially cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), cancer, obesity and type 2 diabetes mellitus, currently kill more people every year than any other cause of death. Four factors in the epidemiology of these diseases – poor diet, physical inactivity, tobacco and alcohol use – are of overwhelming importance to public health. Fruit and vegetables are an important component of a healthy diet and, if consumed daily in sufficient amounts, could help prevent major diseases such as CVDs and certain cancers. According to The World Health Report 2002, low fruit and vegetable intake is estimated to cause about 31% of ischaemic heart disease and 11% of stroke worldwide. Overall it is estimated that up to 2.7 million lives could potentially be saved each year if fruit and vegetable consumption was sufficiently increased. Recommendations in this direction tend to complement and reinforce other valid messages based on the long known health benefits of consuming vegetables and fruit as dietary sources of fibre, vegetable proteins and protective micronutrients.

The recent Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases, recommended the intake of a minimum of 400g of fruit and vegetables per day (excluding potatoes and other starchy tubers) for the prevention of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity, as well as for the prevention and alleviation of several micronutrient deficiencies, especially in less developed countries.2 The recommendation thus adds to the already strong case for the health benefits to be gained from the consumption of fruit and vegetables and paves the way for concrete action advocating increased consumption of these commodities.

WHO has responded to the global rise in NCDs by giving increasing attention to their prevention and control, most recently through the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health endorsed at the Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly on 22 May 2004.3 Within the framework of this Global Strategy, WHO aims to actively promote an increase in fruit and vegetable intake worldwide. To reach this goal, WHO and FAO have formed a partnership around the theme of fruit and vegetables for health.
Diets high in fruits and vegetables are widely recommended for their health-promoting properties. Fruits and vegetables have historically held a place in dietary guidance because of their concentrations of vitamins, especially vitamins C and A; minerals, especially electrolytes; and more recently phytochemicals, especially antioxidants. Additionally, fruits and vegetables are recommended as a source of dietary fiber.

Certain fruits and vegetables are rich sources of vitamin C, but these rich sources (citrus fruits, strawberries, green peppers, white potatoes) are spread over many fruit and vegetable categories. Other fruits and vegetables, including avocado, corn, potatoes, and dried beans, are rich in starch, whereas sweet potatoes are mostly sucrose, not starch. Fruits (except bananas) and dark green vegetables contain little or no starch. Often, dietary guidance rules place fruit juices and potatoes in separate categories, because of dietary directives to eat whole fruits and minimize consumption of foods high in fat and sodium, i.e., French fries.

The following are the fruits which have medicinal properties:

1. **Papaya**
   - Unani Name: Papeeta
   - Botanical Name: *Carica papaya*
   - Habitat: Considered a native of the W. Indies, the shores of the Gulf of Mexico and perhaps of Brazil.
   - **Medicinal Properties**
     - Digestive
     - Appetizer
     - Carminative
     - Diuretic
     - Emenagogue
     - Anthelmintic

2. **Water Melon**
   - Unani Name: Tarbuz
   - Botanical Name: *Citrullus vulgaris*
   - Habitat: It is cultivated along the river sides on sandy areas. It is commonly found in India.
   - **Medicinal Properties**
     - Sedative to bile
     - Diuretic

3. **Citron**
   - Unani Name: Turanj
   - Botanical Name: *Citrus medica*
   - Habitat: It is cultivated in hilly areas.
   - **Medicinal Properties**
     - Antidote to poisons
     - Antidys-enteric

4. **Mulberry**
   - Unani Name: Toot
   - Botanical Name: *Morus indica*
   - Habitat: In India, it is found in hilly and plain areas.
   - **Medicinal Properties**
     - Deobstruent
     - Laxative
     - Expectorant
     - Sedative to bile
     - Anti-inflammatory

5. **Jambul**
   - Unani Name: Jamun
   - Botanical name: *Eugenia jambolana*
   - Habitat: It is found throughout India.
   - **Medicinal Properties**
     - Astringent
     - Haemostatic
     - Antidiarrhoeal
     - Hypoglycemic

6. **Chilkosa**
   - Unani Name: Chilghoza
   - Botanical Name: *Pinus gerardiana*
   - Habitat: It is cultivated in hilly areas.
   - **Medicinal Properties**
     - General tonic
     - Aphrodisiac
     - Semen viscositive
     - Expectorant
     - Calorific

7. **Musk Melon**
   - Unani Name: Kharpaza
   - Botanical Name: *Cucumis melo Linn.*
   - Habitat: It is found in India in large quantity.
   - **Medicinal Properties**
     - Nutrient
     - Diaphoretic
     - Lithotripsic
     - Deobstruent

8. **Dates**
   - Unani Name: Khajur
   - Botanical Name: *Phoenix dactylefera*
   - Habitat: It is commonly found in Arab and Iran and also found in India.
   - **Medicinal Properties**
     - Nutrient
     - Aphrodisiac
     - Neurotonic
     - Haemopoeitic
     - Anabolic and Androgenic

9. **Peaches**
   - Unani Name: Arhoo
   - Botanical Name: *Prunus persica*
   - Habitat: Probably indigenous in China commonly cultivated in W. Asia, Europe. Also in Baluchistan, in the Himalaya, kunawar up to 10,000 ft in the plains of N. India, in Manipur and upper Burma.
   - **Medicinal Properties**
     - Antipyretic
     - Sedative for bile and blood
     - Laxative

10. **Perris**
    - Unani Name: Falsa shakri
    - Botanical Name: *Grewia asiatica*
    - Habitat: It is equatorial Plant. It is usually found in the regions of Asia.
    - **Medicinal properties**
    - Cardiotonic
11. Lemon
Unani Name: Lemun
Botanical Name: *Citrus limonum* Linn.
Habitat: Throughout India, cultivated in plains and hills in areas up to 1200 m elevation.
Medicinal Properties
- Detergent
- Demulcent
- Antiemetic
- Antinauseating
- Desicant
- Hepatotonic
- Stomachic
- Antiseptic
- Antibacterial
- Digestive
- Appetizer
- Antidandruff

12. Grapes
Unani Name: *Angolor*
Botanical Name: *Vitis venifera*
Habitat: A native of W. Asia. Cultivated in many parts of India especially in N. W. India.
Medicinal Properties
- Cardiotonic
- Sedative for bile and phlegm
- Laxative
- Concoctive
- Used in Gastritis
- Liver tonic
- Aphrodisiac
- Anabolic and Androgenic

13. Myrobalan
Unani Name: Halela
Botanical Name: *Terminalia chebula*
Habitat: It is commonly found in Asam, Bengal, Mumbai and Chennai.
Medicinal Properties
- Brain tonic
- Blood moderator and purifier
- Antidiarrheal
- Used in facial paralysis and piles

14. Mango
Unani Name: Aam
Botanical Name: *Mangifera indica*
Habitat: It is a famous fruit of India and Pakistan. It is cultivated in Egypt, Sweden, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Australia, Oman etc.
Medicinal properties
- Sedative
- Laxative
- Diuretic
- Antiemetic
- General tonic

15. Guava
Unani Name: Amrood
Botanical Name: *Psidium guajava*
Habitat: Original place is South America but which is cultivated in India and Pakistan is famous for his taste.
Medicinal Properties
- Astringent
- Haemostatic
- Cardiotonic
- General tonic
- Stomachic
- Appetizer

16. Pineapple
Unani Name: Ananas
Botanical Name: *Ananas sativas* schuttt
Habitat: Its actual habitat is South America. In India, it is cultivated in Asam, East Bengal and eastern India.
Medicinal Properties
- Nutrient
- Exhilarant
- Cardiotonic
- Brain tonic
- Diuretic
- Laxative
- Used in Jaundice

17. White Pumpkin
Unani Name: Petha
Botanical Name: *Benincasa hirsuta*
Habitat: Probably a native of Japan and Java. Cultivated more or less throughout India and in many warm countries.
Medicinal Properties
- Febrile sedative
- Diuretic
- Haemostatic

18. Water Chest Nut
Unani Name: Singhara
Botanical Name: *Trapa bispinosa* Roxb
Habitat: Throughout India, Ceylon and tropical Africa.
Medicinal Properties
- Febrile sedative
- Aphrodisiac
- Semen producing
- Tonic for gums
- Analgesic

19. Coconut
Unani Name: Nariyal
Botanical Name: *Cocos nucifera* Linn.
Habitat: It is commonly found in Srilanka. In India, it is found in Bengal, Chennai and Asam.
Medicinal properties
- General tonic
- Brain tonic
- Antitussive
- Anthelmintic
20. Apple
Unani Name: Seb
Botanical Name: Pyrus malus
Habitat: It is cultivated in all the moderate parts of the world. It is also cultivated in European countries like Italy, France and Germany.
Medicinal Properties
- Haemopoetic
- Tonic for gums
- Analgesic
- Cardiotonic
- Lithotripsic
- Appetizer
- Digestive
- Liver tonic
- Hypnotic
- Aphrodisiac
- Antidandruff

21. Custard Apple
Unani Name: Shareefa
Botanical Name: Annona squamosa
Habitat: It is a plant of hot and wet climate. It is famous fruit of India and Pakistan. It is cultivated in Pakistan.
Medicinal Properties
- Antacid
- Antihemorrhoids
- Appetizer
- Digestive
- Anthelmintic
- General tonic
- Cardiotonic
- Aphrodisiac
- Diuretic

22. Pear
Unani Name: Nashpati
Botanical Name: Pyrus communis
Habitat: Its main habitat is Central America. It is also cultivated in South Africa and Australia.
Medicinal Properties
- Laxative
- Tonic for vital organs
- Sedative for blood
- Antacid
- Haemopoetic
- Antispasmodic
- Blood purifier

23. Litchi
Unani Name: Leechi
Botanical Name: Litchi chinensis
Habitat: It is evergreen fruit of equator. Its main habitat is China. It is also cultivated in India, Bangladesh, Brazil, South Africa, Australia, Malaysia and Pakistan.
Medicinal Properties
- Tonic for gums
- Antiscurvy
- Brain tonic
- Nerve tonic
- Sedative for blood
- Cardiotonic
- Antipyreic

24. Orange
Unani Name: Sangtara
Botanical Name: Citrus sinensis
Habitat: It is cultivated in India, Pakistan, America, Italy and South Africa.
Medicinal Properties
- Antipyretic
- Blood purifier
- Cardiotonic
- Digestive
- Laxative
- Antitussive

25. Banana
Unani Name: Kela
Botanical Name: Paradisiaca musa
Habitat: It is cultivated in different countries like West Indies, Brazil, East and South Africa, Indonesia and India.
Medicinal Properties
- Laxative
- Haemopoetic
- Used in skin diseases
- Antiarthritis
- Antispasmodic
- Antidyssentric

26. Cedar
Unani Name: Ber
Botanical Name: Habitation: Its main habitat is China. It is also found in India.
Medicinal Properties
- General tonic
- Antiflatulance
- Anthelmintic
- Digestive
- Appetizer
- Antiallergic
- Antiseptic
- Antidiarrhoeal
- Liver tonic

27. Sapodilla
Unani Name: Cheeku
Botanical Name: Manikara zapota
Habitat: Its main habitat is Mexico. In India, it is cultivated in Surat and Mumbai.
Medicinal Properties
- Febrile sedative
- Cardiotonic
- Tonic for gums
- Antipyretic
- Brain tonic
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