

Bitter Melon

Botanical Name: *Momordica charantia*

Family: Cucurbitaceae

Energetics: Cooling, drying

Taste: Intensely bitter

Actions: Hypoglycemic, digestive bitter, antiviral, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial

Overview

Bitter Melon is a powerful bitter herb and food traditionally used to regulate blood sugar, support digestion, and clear heat from the body. Widely used in Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine, and folk medicine, it is valued for metabolic balance and immune support.

Uses

Internal Uses

- Supports healthy blood sugar regulation
- Improves insulin sensitivity
- Digestive bitter to stimulate digestion
- Antiviral and antimicrobial support
- Traditionally used for metabolic syndrome and inflammation

External Uses

- Poultices for skin infections or inflammation
 - Topical washes for fungal conditions
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Medication Interactions

- May enhance effects of insulin and blood sugar-lowering medications
 - Use caution with antidiabetic drugs
 - May interact with antiviral medications
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Contraindications

- Pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Hypoglycemia or low blood sugar conditions
- Children (medicinal doses)

- G6PD deficiency
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Caution & Safety

- Monitor blood sugar closely when using
 - Not intended for long-term daily use without supervision
 - Excessive use may cause gastrointestinal upset
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Herbal Pairings

Blends Well With

- Gymnema (blood sugar support)
- Cinnamon (metabolic balance)
- Fenugreek (glucose regulation)
- Turmeric (anti-inflammatory synergy)
- Ginger (digestive comfort)

Avoid Combining With

- Other strong hypoglycemic herbs in high doses
 - Blood sugar-lowering pharmaceuticals without supervision
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Possible Side Effects

- Nausea
 - Abdominal cramping
 - Diarrhea
 - Hypoglycemia with excessive use
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Forms & Dosage

Tea / Decoction

- ½–1 tsp dried fruit per cup
- Simmer 10–15 minutes
- 1 cup daily

Tincture (1:5)

- 1–2 mL, 1–2 times daily

Capsules / Powder

- 500–1,000 mg, 1–2 times daily

Food Use

- Fresh fruit cooked and consumed as food
- Start with small amounts due to bitterness

Notes

Bitter Melon is a strong metabolic herb best used intentionally and with monitoring. Its ability to regulate blood sugar and clear excess heat makes it invaluable when used carefully.

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