



Therapeutic and Nutritional Value of Hibiscus- A Review

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ABSTRACT

The common name for hibiscus is *japa*.it lacks fragrance but has great medicinal properties. This plant does not bear any fruit but has various shades and color.it regulates the aggravated balance of vatta, pitta and kapha doshas. The purpose of this detailed study is to know the relevant facts and make this common herb useful in every household into various medicinal uses to live a radical free life.it is an herb that has been used in different parts of the world because of its vast beneficial properties, and as an herbal remedy to many diseases the interesting fact about hibiscus is that all the parts of it is used like the flower, leaves and root.

KEYWORDS: Hibiscus (Japa)

INTRODUCTION

Hibiscus sabdariffa is a genus of the Malvaceae or Mallow family. In Iran, it is typically known as, "sour tea"; in English-speaking countries it is called "Red Sorrel". Originally from Angola, it is now cultivated throughout tropical and subtropical regions, especially from Sudan, Egypt, Thailand, Mexico and China. *Hibiscus sabdariffa* is a genus of the Malvaceae or Mallow family. In Iran, it is typically known as, "sour tea"; in English-speaking countries it is called "Red Sorrel". Originally from Angola, it is now cultivated throughout tropical and subtropical regions, especially from Sudan, Egypt, Thailand, Mexico and China. The generic name is derived from the Greek word (hibiskos), which was the name Dioscorides (ca. 40-90) gave to *Althaea Officinalis* or Marshmallow. Hibiscus species are used to represent nations: *Hibiscus syriacus* is the national flower of South Korea, and *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* is the national flower of Malaysia. The red hibiscus is the flower of the Hindu Goddess, Kali and appears frequently in depictions of her in the art of Bengal, often with the goddess and the flower merging in form. Hibiscus is used as an offering to goddess Kali and Lord Ganesha in Hindu worship.

Hibiscus flowers contain cyanidin, a naturally occurring pigment also found in healthy berries, cranberry, hawthorn, grapes, raspberry, acai, elderberry, as well as red onions. Studies suggest that extracts of Hibiscus help maintain healthy cholesterol levels that are already in the normal range it has also been used traditionally to support healthy fluid retention levels and overall cardiovascular health. [1]

IMPORTANCE OF HIBISCUS

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis is rich in medicinal properties. The understanding of these properties will help us to better utilize this herb. These also indicate the conditions in which we should avoid it. For example it is not recommended to use internally *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* while trying to have baby due to its antifertility, anti-spermatogenic and contraceptive properties. It must not be used in pregnancy as it Abortifacient in action.

Below is given medicinal properties along with the meaning. [2]

1. **Abortifacient:** Causing abortion.
2. **Antifertility:** Tending to reduce or destroy fertility
3. **Anti-estrogenic:** Blocks the production or utilization of estrogens, or inhibits their effects. Estrogens are the family of hormones that promote the development and maintenance of female sex characteristics.
4. **Anti-implantation:** Prevent implantation or attachment of the fertilized egg to the uterine lining.
5. **Anti-ovulatory:** Suppressing ovulation.
6. **Anti-inflammatory:** Reducing inflammation by acting on body mechanisms.
7. **Anticonvulsant:** Prevent or reduce the severity of epileptic fits or other convulsions.
8. **Antioxidant:** Neutralize the oxidant effect of free radicals and other substances.
9. **Antispasmodic:** Used to relieve spasm of involuntary muscle.
10. **Anthelmintic:** Antiparasitic, expel parasitic worms (helminthes) and other internal parasites from the body.
11. **Anti-hyperglycemic:** Counteracting high levels of glucose in the blood.
12. **Contraceptive:** Serving to prevent pregnancy.
13. **CNS depressing:** Depression of the central nervous system that can result in decreased rate of breathing, decreased heart rate, and loss of consciousness.
14. **Diuretic:** Promoting excretion of urine/agent that increases the amount of urine excreted.

MECANISUM OF HIBISCUS

Red hibiscus flowers are very common and widely used for medicinal purposes.

The bark leaves and flowers are known to possess medicinal properties.

1) Hibiscus and Hair Health

Hibiscus promotes hair growth and prevents premature hair greying by reducing excessive body heat, stimulating blood circulation to the scalp, and increasing the supply of essential nutrients to the hair follicles. Intellectuals with a Pitta-predominant constitution and people into the work habit of staying awake during late nights tends to lose their hair due to excess heat trapped under the skin. Hibiscus tea helps regulate that excess heat and balance Pitta.

2) Hibiscus Hair Oil

There are various preparation methods of hair oil such as:



- Boil hibiscus flowers and fenugreek seeds in coconut oil. Cool, strain and store in a bottle. Use this oil regularly to massage the scalp.
- Grind hibiscus leaves and flowers to paste and mix with virgin coconut oil. Simmer together on low heat until the water content disappears. Filter and then store in a clean glass bottle.

An application of the paste of tender and fresh hibiscus leaves with water heals skin problems of the scalp such as itching, burning, etc.

3) Hibiscus Hair Wash

- Soak 10 hibiscus flower petals in 500 ml (2 cups) of water overnight.
- The next morning squeeze the flowers with your hands and remove from the solution.
- Apply the filtered liquid to your hair.
- Cover your hair with a shower cap.
- Rinse with warm water after 20 minutes.

4) Treat Alopecia with Hibiscus

Alopecia, also known as baldness, is a serious concern for many people, especially young ones. Baldness can be due to numerous reasons which remain unspecified to this day. It manifests as severe hair loss, causing patches to appear on the scalp.

According to Ayurveda, hair roots get damaged due to excessive body heat. To treat this condition, make paste of 6-8 leaves and flowers of hibiscus and apply it on the head (the affected parts of the scalp in particular). Leave the mask for 3 hours and wash with lukewarm water. Repeat this twice a week. It helps to re-open the pores, provides nourishment to the scalp, and promotes hair growth.

5) Hibiscus is good for Controlling Pitta Diseases(As per Ayurveda)

Hibiscus flowers taste *madhura* (sweet) and *kashayam* (astringent). They are cold in terms of potency and can reduce aggravated Pitta and balance *Kapha*.

Due to their *Pitta*-pacifying action and *raktastambhak* (anti-hemorrhagic) properties, hibiscus flowers are widely used in the treatment of pimples, bleeding disorders, or bleeding gums. They are good for the heart and effective in lowering blood pressure.

Hibiscus is widely used in gynecological conditions such as excessive menstrual bleeding (*menorrhagia*, *polymenorrhea*, *polymenorrhagia*, and *metrorrhagia*). Ayurveda refers to this condition as *Raktapradar*.

Hibiscus is also useful in the treatment of painful menstruation. Hemorrhoids, urinary disorders e.g. UTI, insomnia and skin disorders are other areas where it can be used.

6) Hibiscus and Anemia

Anemia is a disorder whereby the level of hemoglobin decreases mainly due to a lack of iron in the blood. Hibiscus naturally helps to increase iron and pacify the excess heat (*Pitta*) in the blood.

7) Hibiscus Tea



- Add 5 hibiscus petals to a glass of boiling water. After 2 minutes of boiling, remove from the heat. Strain and let cool to warm. Add organic sugar if desired.
- If Hibiscus flowers are not easily available, 1 teaspoon of dried flower powder can be used.
- After several months of regular use, body heat will restore its balance. Any blood loss in the past will get corrected and the blood level will be raised without any side effects.

8) Hibiscus as Natural Hormone-Balancing Remedy

Drinking hibiscus tea can help alleviate menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes. Its *Pitta*-pacifying properties, cold potency and ability to balance excess heat in the blood make hibiscus a natural remedy for hormone balance during menopause.

In case of depression and mood swings during menopause, take white hibiscus petals and boil them for 3-4 minutes. Take one cup of the decoction per day. By balancing the hormones naturally, hibiscus helps overcome mood swings and mental weakness.

9) Hibiscus and Skin

Hibiscus heals swollen areas and other types of skin problems such as itching, burning, etc. Prepare paste of tender and fresh hibiscus leaves by grinding them with water. Apply the paste on swollen areas. Relief can be expected in several minutes.

Acne: Add hibiscus powder or paste of fresh hibiscus blossoms to your face masks to have clear and radiant skin. Hibiscus extract has been shown to function as an anti-solar agent by absorbing ultraviolet radiation, reducing signs of aging topically.

10) Hibiscus as a Natural Cooling Agent

Hibiscus tea can have a cooling, diuretic effect on the body. It also benefits the liver and helps alleviate constipation. Hibiscus’ sweet taste, cold potency and astringent properties provide cooling relief from the summer heat. Hibiscus cools your liver and reduces the heat of the blood by purging hot bile from the gall bladder. With its high antioxidant levels, hibiscus reduces low-grade systemic inflammation when the lymphatic system is congested.

11) Hibiscus and Hypertension

Hibiscus is a traditional remedy for high blood pressure due to its diuretic action and blood-thinning properties. If hot temper and excess heat are causing build-up in pressure, hibiscus can neutralize the heat, detoxify the liver and bile, fight inflammation and lymphatic congestion, improve blood circulation, and lower blood pressure naturally. A cup of hibiscus tea per day is enough.

12) Hibiscus and Metabolism

The astringent and cooling properties of hibiscus calm an overheated stomach, reducing your appetite to natural levels. The diuretic and blood-thinning qualities of hibiscus will help you get a smaller waistline and improve your mood. [3]

ROUTE OF ADMINISTRATION

Hibiscus is used for various diseases [4-6]

INTERNAL		EXTERNAL
• Lower blood pressure		• Wound healing
• Lower blood fat levels		• Hair growth
• Boost liver health		• Elasticity & flexibility of skin
• Promote weight loss		• Increase in skin hydric content retention
• Cancer prevention		• Fights aging
• Fight bacteria		• Hair management
• Anti – oxidant		• allergic eczema

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

✓ Nutritional composition of Hibiscus flowers on fresh weight bases (Yashaswini et al. [7])

MAJOR COMPONENTS		MINERALS		VITAMIN	
Water	89.9%	Calcium	4 mg*	Thiamine(B1)	0.03mg*
Protein	0.06g*	Phosphorus	27 mg	Riboflavin(B2)	0.05mg*
Fat	0.4g	Iron	1.7	Niacin	0.6mg
fiber	1.56g			Ascorbic acid	4.2mg

- ✓ Nutritional composition of Hibiscus flowers on dry weight bases (water 0%) (Yashaswini et al. [7])

Calories	353g*	Minerals		Vitamins	
Protein	3.9g	Calcium	39mg*	Thiamine(b1)	0.29mg*
Fat	3.9g	Phosphorus	265mg	Riboflavin(b2)	0.49mg
Carbohydrate	86.3g	Iron	1.7mg	Niacin	5.9mg
Fiber	15.7g	Ash	5.9mg	Ascorbic acid	3.9mg

- ✓ Nutritional composition of Hibiscus leaves on dry weight bases

Fat	3.5g*	calcium	1670mg*
Carbohydrate	69.7g	Phosphorus	520mg
Fiber	15.5g	Ash	11.4mg

*figures in Tables 1-3 in grams (g) or Milligrams (mg) per 100g of foods.

CONTRADICTIONS IF ANY

Hibiscus is likely safe for most people in when consumed in food amounts. It is possibly safe when taken by mouth appropriately in medicinal amounts. Side effects of hibiscus are uncommon but might include temporary stomach upset or pain, gas, constipation, nausea, painful urination, headache, ringing in the ears, or shakiness. [8]

Special Precautions & Warnings:

Pregnancy and breast-feeding: Hibiscus is possibly unsafe when taken by mouth in large amounts as a medicine.

Diabetes: Hibiscus might decrease blood sugar levels. The dose of your diabetes medications might need to be adjusted by your healthcare provider.

Low blood pressure: Hibiscus might lower blood pressure. In theory, taking hibiscus might make blood pressure become too low in people with low blood pressure.

Surgery: Hibiscus might affect blood sugar levels, making blood sugar control difficult during and after surgery. Stop using hibiscus at least 2 weeks before a scheduled surgery.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Hibiscus herb and plant is grown throughout the world with wide beneficial properties. Its numerous benefits like anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, infections etc. lower side effects of this plant makes this a therapeutic plant to inculcate in everyday lives. Hibiscus is widely used for its medicinal and nutritional properties which clinical studies have also proven about its encouraging effect on human health. Hibiscus tea has become popular with people because of its advantages and is taking the ancient Ayurvedic route for a better life.

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