Flaxseed
A Review of the Reported Health Benefits

Flax (Linum usitatissimum) produces small, flat seeds ranging in color from golden yellow to reddish brown. The seeds can be consumed as whole seed, ground (powder or meal), or as flaxseed oil. Flaxseed has many health benefits and there has been a large increase in sales of flax products.

Most of the benefits reported from flaxseed consumption are believed to be due to three important components found in flaxseeds: α-linolenic acid (ALA), lignans, and fiber.

Flaxseed oil is a unique vegetable oil in that it is composed of 73% polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA), 18% monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFA) and 9% saturated fatty acids (SFA), making it a low-saturated fat food. It is also the richest known source of the omega 3 (n-3) fatty acid, ALA, which comprises 55% of the total fatty acids. In fact, the percent of fat as ALA in flaxseed oil is 5.5 times higher than the next highest sources, walnuts and canola.

Uses of Flaxseed

Ground flaxseed is most commonly used as a laxative and is also used for hot flashes and breast pain.

Flaxseed oil is used to treat arthritis.

Both ground flaxseed and flaxseed oil have been used as a treatment for high cholesterol level and also as a treatment for cancer prevention.

Composition of Flaxseed Based on Serving Size of One Tablespoon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Flaxseed</th>
<th>Weight (g)</th>
<th>Energy (kcal)</th>
<th>ALA (g)</th>
<th>Total Dietary Fiber (g)</th>
<th>Soluble Fiber</th>
<th>SDG Content (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Seed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Seed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flaxseed Oil</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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