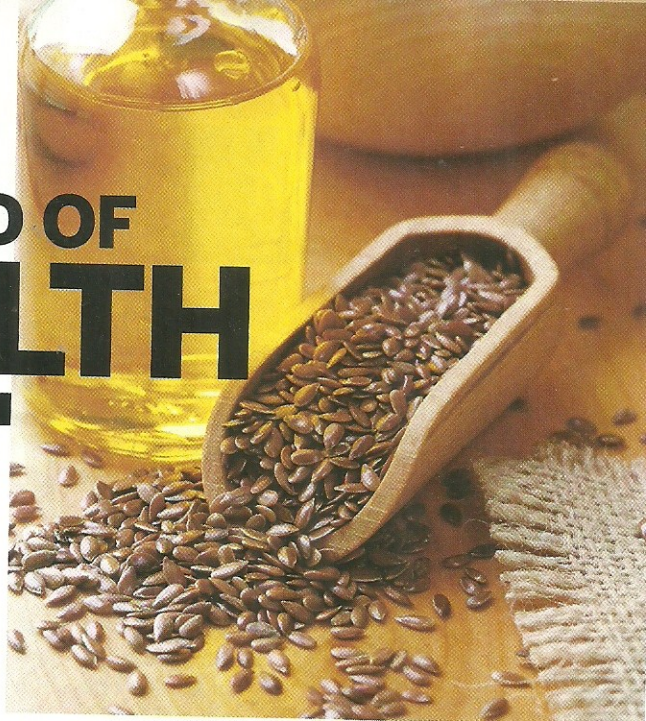


THE SEED OF HEALTH

The nutty flavour of flaxseeds combined with the omega-3 fatty acids they contain make flaxseeds the perfect addition to your diet. By **Poornima Makaram**



Derived from the flax plant and shaped like apple pips, these little seeds pack a huge punch in terms of nutritional value. One teaspoon of ground flaxseeds contains 0.7 g polyunsaturated fats, 6 mg calcium, 0.7 gram fibre and 13 calories.

Mumbai-based nutritionist, Kajal Thosani lists the benefits, "Flaxseeds are high in the B vitamins, magnesium and manganese. They are loaded with omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential unsaturated fats that are great for circulation, reducing blood

pressure and fighting arthritis. They also have great cardiovascular benefits. They are rich in dietary fibre, which helps in the proper functioning of the intestines. Flaxseeds also contain phytoestrogen, which helps regulate female hormones and protects against some forms of cancer."

But she cautions against overuse, "Flaxseeds are beneficial when they are eaten in small quantities. I recommend having not more than about two teaspoons early in the day, followed by good quantities of water to maximise the benefit. Women

in India are known to chew flaxseeds constantly throughout the day, not realising that when eaten in larger quantities, they get converted to fat and stored in the body."

Flaxseeds need to be stored in airtight containers because they oxidise easily and become rancid. You also get the benefits when the seed is ground before eating. Some tasty ways to include flaxseeds in your diet are to sprinkle them on your yoghurt, include a spoonful in your breakfast cereal or add them to shakes and smoothies.

Flaxseed chutney powder

- 1 cup flaxseeds
- 3 flakes garlic
- a handful of dry curry leaves
- 1 teaspoon chilli powder
- salt to taste

Roast flaxseeds on a dry pan till the seeds begin to darken.

Powder the seeds in a grinder. Now add the remaining ingredients and grind again to a smooth powder. This powder can be sprinkled on *dosas* and toasted bread, or mixed with a small amount of yoghurt and eaten with rice flour rotis.

Flaxseed crackers

- 1 cup flaxseed meal (ground flaxseeds)
- 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 5 flakes garlic, grated
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup water

Mix all the ingredients together. You can also add spices of your

choice like *ajwain*, *jeera* or oregano. Roll out on a greased sheet. Pre-heat oven and bake at 200°C for 15 minutes. Cool and break into pieces. Serve with the cheese of your choice. ●

