

Herb for Diabetes & PCOS Pregnancy Preparation



223



Did you know that high blood glucose levels in women with [diabetes](#) and insulin resistant PCOS can prevent an embryo from implanting in the uterus? It can. These conditions may cause a miscarriage before the woman even knows she is pregnant.

12.6 million American women have diabetes. 13 million American men have diabetes. 7 million additional Americans have diabetes and don't even know it. An estimated 5 million American women have PCOS. Both diabetes and insulin resistant PCOS can make it harder to have a baby, but there is hope through the traditional Indian herb Gymnema.

Gymnema has been used for hundreds of years by Ayurvedic practitioners to reduce high blood sugar. Before the nineteenth century they did not yet diagnose their patients as diabetic; they did not yet have the diagnostic tools to do so. The Ayurvedic practitioners simply called it *madhumeha*, which means "honey urine". It was named madhumeha because ants were attracted to the urine of these patients, because it was sweet. The first documentation of Gymnema use to control hyperglycemia was in 1920. Since then this plant has been studied several times for managing blood glucose levels.

Benefits of Gymnema on Insulin Levels

This herb has a "sugar blocking" action on taste buds and the small intestine. Gymnema blocks the typical paths that sugar molecules take during digestion, delaying the absorption of sugar. This plant has the ability to lower high blood sugar levels in people with hyperglycemia, typical in diabetics. It does this by stimulating the regeneration of pancreatic cells that produce insulin, which aids in more insulin production; in turn stimulating production of enzymes that help with the uptake of glucose into cells; and then prevents stimulation of the liver to produce more glucose. Gymnema also appears to have a lipid-lowering effect, which aids in weight loss. Weight management is of particular concern for both type 2 diabetes and insulin resistant [PCOS](#).

Several studies have shown that Gymnema is so effective, doctors were able to take some of their diabetes patients off of their prescription medications. What is the advantage in choosing Gymnema over prescription medication? Gymnema has been shown to control and lower blood glucose levels without lowering it below normal levels. Some prescription medication can cause blood glucose levels to become too low.

Key Reasons to Manage Blood Glucose Levels Prior to Trying to Conceive

- High glucose levels in men can cause lower sperm count
- Sperm cells exposed to high glucose levels have been shown to have DNA deletion which may contribute to miscarriage or birth defects
- High glucose levels can contribute to hormonal imbalance
- High glucose levels in women may cause damage to the embryonic cells, increasing risk of miscarriage and birth defects
- Increased risk for gestational diabetes in the mother
- Increased risk for a larger baby, which potentially may require a cesarean section birth

It is best to take at least 3-6 months to lower and balance blood glucose levels, prior to trying to conceive if you have diabetes, or insulin resistant PCOS. Talk to your health care practitioner to see if Gymnema could be a part of your health plan, along with important diet, exercise and lifestyle changes.

Suggested Dosage of Gymnema

Gymnema (*Gymnema sylvestre*, *G. sylvestris*) is a vining plant, with oval shaped leaves and yellow flower clusters. It is indigenous to tropical Asian forests. The part of the plant that is used is the leaves. Gymnema comes in loose powder, capsules, tablets and liquid tincture (extract). It may take several weeks for Gymnema to have a therapeutic effect on the body. It has been shown safe for use until desired effects are achieved.

Loose powder and capsules: 200-400mg, 2-3 times per day

Liquid Tincture: 2mL, 2-3 times per day

Precautions:

Gymnema has been shown to be extremely safe for use, but you should consult with your healthcare practitioner before beginning use of this herb. Gymnema may increase insulin levels and decrease iron absorption in healthy, non-diabetic people. Theoretical potentiation of lipid lowering drug, glucose-lowering and hypoglycemic medications. Not for use in pregnancy or lactation.

References:

1. Barney, Maren. Gymnema Natural Ayurvedic Herb for Diabetes, Woodland Publishing, 2006
2. Romm, Aviva, Botanical Medicine for Women's Health, Churchill Livingstone, 2010
3. <http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/statistics/#fast>
4. <http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/polycystic-ovary-syndrome.cfm#b>