MOMORDICA CHARANTIA EXTRACT: PRODUCT OVERVIEW

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“Herbal Help For Better Blood Sugar Management”

Diabetes affects an estimated 3.4% of the American population. It is slightly more prevalent in women (340 cases per every 100,000) than in men (300 per 100,000). There are essentially two types of this disease: Type I is regarded as insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM), while Type II is considered to be non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM). Some ethnic groups such as the Pima Indians of Arizona are more genetically disposed to this disease, having 35% prevalence in their culture.

Type I invariably requires daily injections of insulin, but both kinds can be managed quite well with dietary changes, moderate exercise, effective weight reduction, and natural supplements such as herbs, vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and enzymes. Herbs, in particular, are especially beneficial in dealing with this particular health problem. What one would be looking for in medicinal plants isn’t so much a “cure”, as a safe and reliable way to better manage body blood sugar levels.

Some of the more commonly used herbs for this problem have been garlic, goldenseal root, and cayenne pepper. But their effects in reducing elevated blood sugar aren’t always consistent. Diabetics who’ve routinely used these three herbs have reported what may be described as a “seesaw” action in their hypoglycemic activities: an alternating influence in which their hypoglycemic effects may be felt sometimes, but not at other times. What would be nice is to have an herb that is always consistent in its blood sugar-lowering properties.

The herb, which nicely meets these criteria in every way, is Momordica charantia, also known as bitter gourd, which is indigenous throughout Central and South America and ranges from China to the Molucas on the other side of the world. It is both a food and medicine in many countries where it grows quite prolifically. Momordica is a climbing, almost smooth, annual vine with yellow flowers and yielding a fruit that can be either ovoid (wild) or oblong and cylindrical (cultivated), with pointed ends that are ribbed and wrinkled.

Many Third World country residents, who have ready access to it, will either roast the wild form and eat it with salt, or wash and slice the cultivated form, mash it up with some salt, vinegar and onions and eat it as an accompanying salad to various meat and fish dishes. The leaves are nutritious sources of calcium,
magnesium, potassium, phosphorus and iron; both the edible fruit and leaves are great sources of the B vitamins.

Momordica has figured quite heavily into the folk medicines of many different cultures for a variety of health problems. For instance, throughout the Caribbean, bitter gourd is used in conjunction with ginger root as a decoction for treating acid indigestion, heartburn, bile attack, and abdominal cramps (due to stomach problems).

But where it seems to have shined the most in terms of healing efficacy has been in its application for diabetes. Back in 1979 Indian biochemists reported isolating a hypoglycemic peptide from the fruit, seeds and tissue of Momordica, which they labeled Polypeptide-p (also called p-insulin or v-insulin). When crude extracts were administered to gerbils, langurs, rabbits, and human volunteers, a substantial lowering of blood sugar levels was observed.

In another remarkable study, the effects of this plant in juice form or sliced and fried were observed in nine NIDDM diabetics and six non-diabetic animal models. It was noticed that a water-soluble extract of the fruit significantly reduced blood glucose concentrations during a 50-gram oral glucose tolerance test in the diabetics and after force-feeding in the rats. The fried fruit when consumed daily with other foods, produced a small but significant improvement in glucose tolerance. The report concluded by stating “these results show that [Momordica] improves glucose tolerance in diabetes.”

Momordica is available to the general public in a 5:1 extract. Based on a medical hypothesis, it could exert a direct action on the islets of Langerhans located within the pancreas that are the source of insulin and glucagon (a pancreatic hormone); in so doing, it might stimulate the release of insulin when needed the most. Mormodica also relieves the dehydration that frequently accompanies diabetes. An average of two capsules/tablets are recommended daily with a meal.

This plant can be trusted to deliver what the consumer expects, namely, that of helping improve blood sugar management where such may be required for extensive lengths of time.

Disclaimer: This product overview was written for the sole purpose of giving a brief history along with educational insights into the product listed above. It is not designed, in whole or in part, as advice for self-diagnosis or self-treatment and should not be construed as such. 

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