

## Sabja Seeds- Super Food for Sports Persons.

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### ABSTRACT

Sabja seeds or sweet basil seeds (*Ocimum basilicum*) belong to mint family, native to India. The health benefits of basil leaves are well known and are continuously utilized for thousands of years in Siddha and Ayurvedic medicines, though basil seeds are less known. Sabja seeds are tiny seeds but exhibit exceptional nutritional and therapeutic properties. The seeds are power packed with carbohydrates, soluble fiber, beta carotene, lutein and zeaxanthin. It is an excellent source of iron, calcium, potassium and folates. The boron present in the seeds helps in the absorption and assimilation of calcium and prevents osteoporosis in female athletes. It also possesses strong antioxidant and antibacterial property, which is very useful for players to avert free radical damage and infections. Mucopolysaccharides in sabja seeds help in avoiding fall in blood sugar levels, which is the main cause of dizziness and reduced performance among sportspersons. Being hydrophilic in nature, the sabja seeds hold ten times their weight of water when soaked and forms a gel, so that when consumed keeps the body rehydrated. Retention of moisture enables the body to absorb nutrients better while in the mean time maintains electrolyte balance. The present study aims to study the rehydrating property of sabja seeds by formulating a sports drink with the addition of sabja seeds at different amounts. A natural isotonic sports drink was prepared with fruit juice, tender coconut water, jaggery and electrolytes. Sabja seeds were added at 2g, 4g and 6g per 100ml of sports drink. The drink with the addition of 4g/100ml was highly accepted and tested for its efficacy by 15 sports persons. The players who consumed the sabja seeds added drink, felt energetic and less fatigued than before and their control counterparts. Hence sabja seeds, an inexpensive, super food might be added to the sports drinks to enhance stamina, performance, immunity and health of the sportspersons.