HEALTH BENEFITS OF PULSES

The importance of a balanced diet
Most countries face nutritional problems, from undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies to obesity, leading to diet-related diseases.

Pulses for a healthy diet
Pulses are rich in complex carbohydrates, micronutrients, protein and B-vitamins. Therefore, pulses are a vital part of a healthy diet.

PULSES’ HEALTH BENEFITS

- Pulses promote a steady, slow-burning energy.
- High protein content: incredibly rich in their nutritional value, pulses are small but densely packed with proteins.
- High in complex carbohydrates: low in calories (260-360 kcal/100 g dried pulses)
- High in fibre: (lowers digestion and gives a feeling of satiety)
- Iron*: helps transport oxygen throughout the body. Lack of iron can lead to fatigue, shortness of breath and dizziness.
- Fibre: binds toxins and cholesterol in the gut, removing them from the body.
- Increases stool volume and transit.
- Improved heart health and lower blood cholesterol.
- Better overall health and healthy weight control.

WHY ARE PULSES UNDERESTIMATED?

Some common reasons people give are:

- **Cooking time**: The length of time it takes to cook pulses is a lot longer compared to vegetables.
- **Presence of anti-nutrients**: Raw pulses contain ‘anti nutrients’ (such as phytate, tannin and phenol), which can limit the body’s absorption of minerals.
- **Flatulence**: Some carbohydrates found in pulses produce gas and bloating for some people.
- **‘Poor man’s food’**: They have the stigma of being a ‘poor man’s food’—replaced by meat once people can afford it.

SOAKING YOUR PULSES FOR ADDED NUTRITION

- **4-8h of soaking**: Reduces the cooking time and ensures that they can be more easily digested and their nutrients better absorbed by the body.
- **Soaking in ash solutions**: Will reduce the presence of anti-nutrients more effectively.

**The iron from animal source foods is better used by the body than the iron obtained from pulses. To improve the iron available from pulses, it is advised to combine them with sources of vitamin C, like citrus fruits.**