

The Pet Superfood You Probably Haven't Heard About

Maybe you've used it yourself, but haven't dreamed of using it for your pet. It's a nutritional powerhouse that can help reduce inflammation and may improve liver function. It even has antibacterial, antiviral and antitumor properties. Valuable for 300 human diseases, how could it help your pet?

Analysis by [Dr. Karen Shaw Becker](#)

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Moringa is a superfood that has grown very popular in recent years for both its nutritional and healing properties
- Moringa is loaded with nutrients and antioxidants, and in humans has been shown to help lower blood pressure, reduce inflammation and maintain healthy cholesterol levels
- Moringa also has antiviral and anticancer properties and may help regulate thyroid function
- Moringa is safe to use in dogs, cats, birds and small mammals and has the same health benefits for pets as it does for people

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Moringa oleifera is a fast-growing tree native to South Asia and now found throughout the tropics. Its leaves have been used as part of traditional medicine for centuries, and the Ayurvedic system of medicine associates it with the cure or prevention of about 300 diseases.¹

Moringa, sometimes referred to as the "miracle tree," "drumstick tree" or "horseradish tree," has small, rounded leaves that are packed with an incredible amount of nutrition: protein, calcium, beta carotene, vitamin C, potassium ... you name it, moringa's got it.

6 Reasons Moringa Is a Superfood for Pets

1. **It's a nutritional powerhouse** — Moringa leaves are loaded with vitamins, minerals, essential amino acids and more. One hundred grams of dry moringa leaf contains:²
 - 9 times the protein of yogurt
 - 10 times the vitamin A of **carrots**
 - 12 times the vitamin C of oranges
 - 15 times the potassium of bananas
 - 17 times the calcium of milk
 - 26 times the iron of spinach

2. **It's loaded with antioxidants** — Moringa leaves are rich in antioxidants, including vitamin C, beta-carotene, quercetin and chlorogenic acid. The latter, chlorogenic acid, has been shown to slow cells' absorption of sugar and animal studies have found it to lower blood sugar levels. According to the Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention:

*"The leaves of the Moringa oleifera tree have been reported to demonstrate antioxidant activity due to its high amount of polyphenols. Moringa oleifera extracts of both mature and tender leaves exhibit strong antioxidant activity against free radicals, prevent oxidative damage to major biomolecules, and give significant protection against oxidative damage."*³

3. **Lowers blood sugar levels** — Moringa appears to have antidiabetic effects, likely due to beneficial plant compounds contained in the leaves, including isothiocyanates.⁴ In one study of human diabetic patients, adding 50 grams of moringa leaves to a meal reduced the rise in blood sugar by 21%.⁵

4. **Reduces inflammation** — The isothiocyanates, flavonoids and phenolic acids in moringa leaves, pods and seeds also have anti-inflammatory properties. According to the Epoch Times:

"The tree's strong anti-inflammatory action is traditionally used to treat stomach ulcers. Moringa oil (sometimes called Ben oil) has been shown to protect the liver from chronic inflammation. The oil is unique in that, unlike most vegetable oils, moringa resists rancidity.

*This quality makes it a good preservative for foods that can spoil quickly. This sweet oil is used for both frying or in a salad dressing. It is also used topically to treat antifungal problems, arthritis, and is an excellent skin moisturizer."*⁶

5. **Maintains healthy cholesterol levels** — Moringa also has cholesterol-lowering properties. As noted in the Journal of Ethnopharmacology:

"Moringa oleifera is used in Thai traditional medicine as cardiogenic. Recent studies demonstrated its hypocholesterolemic effect.

... In hypercholesterol-fed rabbits, at 12 weeks of treatment, it significantly ($P < 0.05$) lowered the cholesterol levels and reduced the atherosclerotic plaque formation to about 50 and 86 [percent], respectively. These effects were at degrees comparable to those of simvastatin.

*... The results indicate that this plant possesses antioxidant, hypolipidaemic, and antiatherosclerotic activities, and has therapeutic potential for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases."*⁷

6. **Protects against arsenic toxicity** — The leaves and seeds of moringa may protect against some of the effects of arsenic toxicity, which is especially important in light of news that common staple foods, such as rice, may be contaminated.⁸ Contamination of ground water by arsenic has also become a cause of global public health concern, and one study revealed:

"Co-administration of M. oleifera [moringa] seed powder (250 and 500 mg/kg, orally) with arsenic significantly increased the activities of SOD [superoxide dismutase], catalase and GPx with elevation in reduced GSH level in tissues (liver, kidney, and brain).

These changes were accompanied by approximately 57 [percent], 64 [percent] and 17 [percent] decrease in blood ROS [reactive oxygen species], liver metallothionein (MT) and lipid peroxidation respectively in animal co-administered with M. oleifera and arsenic.

Another interesting observation has been the reduced uptake of arsenic in soft tissues (55 [percent] in blood, 65 [percent] in liver, 54 [percent] in kidneys and 34 [percent] in brain) following administration of M. oleifera seed powder (particularly at the dose of 500 mg/kg).

It can thus be concluded from the present study that concomitant administration of M. oleifera seed powder with arsenic could significantly protect animals from oxidative stress and in reducing tissue arsenic concentration. Administration of M. oleifera seed powder thus could also be beneficial during chelation therapy ..."⁹

This is one of the ways I use moringa in practice. I first learned about it when I was looking for a natural way to remove heavy metals from a toxic Rose Breasted Cockatoo over 10 years ago. He wasn't strong enough to undergo the standard chelation treatment, so I tried moringa instead.

Over several months, it naturally returned his heavy metal values to a normal range without any side effects, and I've been using it ever since for birds, cats and dogs as a natural detoxifier.

Additional Benefits of Moringa

Moringa is high in fiber that may be beneficial for certain pets. In addition, the isothiocyanates in moringa have antibacterial properties. Interestingly, moringa seeds have even been found to work better for water purification than many of the conventional synthetic materials in use today. According to Uppsala University:

"A protein in the seeds binds to impurities causing them to aggregate so that the clusters can be separated from the water. The study ... published in the journal Colloids and Surfaces A takes a step towards optimization of the water purification process."¹⁰

Researchers in Uppsala together with colleagues from Lund as well as Namibia, Botswana, France, and the USA have studied the microscopic structure of aggregates formed with the protein.

The results show that the clusters of material (flocs) that are produced with the protein are much more tightly packed than those formed with conventional flocculating agents. This is better for water purification as such flocs are more easily separated."¹¹

It's possible moringa's ability to attach itself to harmful materials may also happen in the body, making it a potential detoxification tool. According to Fox News Health,¹² the potential healing powers of the moringa plant include treating inflammation, infectious disorders and problems of the cardiovascular and digestive systems. It may also improve liver function and enhance milk flow in nursing mothers.

Moringa is rich in health-enhancing compounds, including moringine, moringinine, quercetin, kaempferol, rhamnetin and various polyphenols. The leaves are popular for the ability to reduce high blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Studies also show that moringa leaves possess not only antiviral activity, but also antitumor and anticancer properties, due in part to the compound niaziminin. Other compounds in the leaves may help regulate thyroid function, especially in cases of hyperthyroidism.

How Moringa Can Be Beneficial for Pets

As you can see, moringa is a diversified plant with many amazing health benefits, all of which apply to animals. Because of the nutrient density, I've used this herb as a whole food iron supplement to assist anemic animals in producing more red blood cells. I've also used it as a whole food supplement for pets consuming less than optimal nutrition (often animals coming out of shelters) to quickly bolster cellular nutrition.

Because the body views moringa as food, I've found this herb to be exceptionally beneficial for sensitive patients who can't tolerate other supplements, and have given it to very old hyperthyroid cats and diabetic ferrets, and have mixed it in a hand feeding formula for neonatal parrots.

I've found moringa to be one of the most diverse herbs on the planet and one you may decide would be a nice addition for your pet to assist in managing a health condition or just as an all-around superfood.

Sources and References

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¹² [Fox News November 12, 2014](#)
