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Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products (HMPC)

Assessment Report Summary for the Public (ARSP)

Fenugreek seed

Trigonella foenum-graecum L., semen

Other names

BG (bulgarski): Гръцки сминдух, семе	LT (lietuvių kalba): Vaistinių ožragių sėklos
CS (čeština): semeno pískavice řeckého sena	LV (latviešu valoda): Griekņu siena trigonellas sēklas
DA (dansk): Bukkehornsfrø	MT (Malti): żerriegħa tal-fenugriek
DE (Deutsch): Bockshornsamen	NL (Nederlands): Fenegriek
EL (elliniká): σπέρμα τριγωνίσκου	PL (polski): Nasienie kozieradki
EN (English): Fenugreek	PT (português): alforvas
ES (español): alholva, semilla de	RO (română): sămânță de schinduf
ET (eesti keel): põld-lambaläätse seeme	SK (slovenčina): semeno senovky gréckej
FI (suomi): sarviapila, siemen	SL (slovenščina): seme mnogosemenskega triplata
FR (français): fenugrec (graine de)	SV (svenska): bockhornsklöver, frö
HR (hrvatski): sjeme grčke piskavice	IS (íslenska): Grikkjasmári
HU (magyar): Görögszénamag	NO (norsk): bukkehornfrø
IT (italiano): Fieno greco seme	



Introduction

This is a summary of the scientific conclusions reached by the Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products (HMPC) on the medicinal uses of Fenugreek seed. It summarises the Committee's recommendations on the use of Fenugreek seed.

The HMPC conclusions are taken into account by EU Member States when evaluating applications for the licensing of herbal medicines containing Fenugreek seed. When a Member State authorises a medicine containing Fenugreek seed, detailed instructions on how to take it will be available in the package leaflet that comes with medicine.

The information in this summary report concerns herbal medicinal products containing Fenugreek seed which are only authorised when they comply with the strict pharmaceutical quality and other requirements for herbal medicinal products. They are approved by the competent authorities to be placed on the market as medicinal products. Other products, like food, food supplements, cosmetic products or medical devices do not follow the same criteria and regulatory requirements as medicinal products and are excluded from this summary.

What is Fenugreek seed and what do Fenugreek herbal medicines contain?

Fenugreek seed is the common name for the seed from the plant *Trigonella foenum-graecum* L.

Medicinal products with Fenugreek seed contain the comminuted (reduced into tiny pieces), the powdered, and the soft or dry extracts of the dried seeds. Soft or dry extracts are obtained by putting the plant material in a solvent to dissolve compounds and form a liquid extract. The solvent is then partially or totally evaporated to obtain a soft or a dry extract.

Herbal medicines containing these fenugreek preparations are usually available as herbal tea to be taken by mouth or to be applied to the skin, or as solid form to be taken by mouth.

What are the medicinal uses of Fenugreek seed?

Fenugreek seed preparations have a traditional use for **temporary loss of appetite** and for the **symptomatic treatment of minor inflammations of the skin** (external use).

Traditional medicinal use means that the use in the specified indication is exclusively based upon long-standing medicinal use and not based on results from clinical studies.

When is it not recommended to use Fenugreek seed?

You can find detailed instructions on how to take Fenugreek seed medicines and who can use them in the package leaflet that comes with the medicine.

Do not use Fenugreek seed:

- for children and adolescents under **18 year** of age.
- if you are **pregnant or breast feed** your child.
- if you are **allergic** to Fenugreek, to peanut, soya and to other plants of the Fabaceae (legume) family.

Consult a doctor or a pharmacist:

- if your symptoms persist longer than **2 weeks** during the **oral** use of the medicinal product.
- if your symptoms persist longer than **1 week** or worsen during the use of the medicinal product, when used **on the skin**. (external use).

What you need to know before taking Fenugreek seed with other medicines?

When use orally, and due to a possible hypoglycaemic effect of Fenugreek seed, close monitoring of blood glucose level should be considered in patients treated for diabetes mellitus.

No interactions with other medicines have been described in the literature at the time of assessment when using Fenugreek seed with other medicines.

What are the risks associated with Fenugreek seed medicines?

You may experience some side effects with Fenugreek seed medicines.

When used orally:

- **Gastrointestinal complaints**, such as flatulence, diarrhoea may occur.

When use orally or when used on the skin (external use):

- You may get **allergic reactions** (swelling of the face, wheezing breathing) or asthma, allergic rhinitis.

The frequency of these undesirable effects is not known.

Risk of overdose:

- High doses, (when taken more than 25g per day) of Fenugreek seed powder have been reported to cause minor gastrointestinal symptoms such as diarrhoea and flatulence.

How does Fenugreek seed work as a medicine?

The HMPC conclusions on the use of these Fenugreek seed medicines used for **temporary loss of appetite** and for the **symptomatic treatment of minor inflammations of the skin** are based on their **'traditional use'**.

This means that, although there is insufficient evidence from clinical trials, the effectiveness of these herbal medicines is plausible and there is evidence that they have been used safely in this way for at least 30 years (including at least 15 years within the European Union.)

How are herbal medicines containing Fenugreek seed approved in the EU?

Any applications for the licensing of medicines containing Fenugreek seed have to be submitted to the national authorities responsible for medicinal products. Before approval, the national authorities assess the quality, safety and efficacy of the herbal medicine. The HMPC conclusions are taken into account when evaluating applications for the licensing of herbal medicines.

Information on approved Fenugreek seed medicines in EU Member States may be obtained from the relevant national authorities.

Further information

Further information on the HMPC scientific assessment of Fenugreek seed medicines, including details of the Committee's conclusions, can be found under the tab 'Documents' on the Agency's website: [Trigonellae foenugraeci semen - herbal medicinal product | European Medicines Agency \(EMA\)](#).