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Toddy: A probiotic drink

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Toddy, a highly nutritive alcoholic drink prepared by fermenting the flower sap, which is obtained from coconut palm is consumed along with the traditional dishes and as a snack. People of India serve toddy in two different ways, namely pathaneer and kallu. Pathaneer or neera is a non-alcoholic sweet beverage that is obtained fresh from the flower sap and kallu is a fermented sour beverage that is not as strong as wine or other alcoholic drink and is also known as the poor man’s rich drink. This drink can be obtained from different species of the palm tree, for example, coconut palm, date palm, etc. Both male and female toddy plants can bear the sap and this drink is known by many names in different parts of the world. A story claims that a drink called hot toddy using a combination of hot brandy with cinnamon or sometimes herbs and other spices and with the addition of sugar water or honey was invented to cure any ailment or illness by an Irish doctor named Robert Bently. Toddy is fermented naturally by tapping, for instance, the juice collected from the buds of palm tree flowers ferments naturally by the presence of yeast and lactic acid bacteria. The types and numbers of organisms vary from tree to tree. Studies have reported that fresh toddy contains 14.1% of total soluble solids which on natural fermentation during storage reduced to 11.4% making it alcoholic by the microbes present in it. Fresh toddy is healthy and nutritious as well. Toddy has been identified as one of the good sources of probiotics. Its health-promoting factors are contributed by its physicochemical properties and presence of microbes. Toddy is associated with many health benefits, such as improvement of the eyesight, reduction of the risk of cardiovascular diseases, fights cancer, helps in the maintenance of healthy skin and hair, promotes lactation, etc. Therefore, drinking fresh toddy in moderation before it ferments has numerous health benefits.

Keywords: Toddy, Pathaneer, Kallu, Palm sap, Coconut palm, Probiotic, Microbes

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