

# Innovative products using amrutham nutrimix and its popularization among young mothers

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## Abstract

Under nutrition in children is a widespread health problem in our country. ICDS that addresses the problem of malnutrition has been unsuccessful even after three decades of implementation. Amrutham nutrimix - a nutritious supplementary food given for malnourished children is not utilized due to monotony in its preparation. Hence an attempt was made to formulate nutritious amrutham based recipes. Twenty common recipes including sweet dishes and savories were prepared. Acceptability of all the developed products was assessed by a taste panel. Iron and protein content was analysed for the 6 most accepted products. All the formulated products were affordable and ranged from 50p (murukku) to Rs.3/-(sweet balls) per 100g. The recipes were displayed and popularized among young mothers as they are the prime caregivers of young toddlers and are willing to change food behavior for the welfare of their children. Recipes and its health benefits were discussed with the participants. The education program was very effective in imparting nutrition knowledge as there was significance in the pre and post test scores. Hence, amrutham nutrimix can be an affordable and acceptable nutritional substitute to WHO recommended ready to use therapeutic food (RUTF) for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) especially when used in diverse forms as suggested in the current study.

**Keywords:** Amrutham nutrimix, Malnutrition, SAM, RUTF

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## Introduction

Hunger is a global measure of food deprivation, while malnutrition is the physiological outcome of hunger. According to the National Family Health Survey 3 conducted in 2005-2006, 48% of the children under 5 years were chronically malnourished (indicating long term food deprivation) and 43% underweight. In the state of Kerala in India, one-quarter of the children under age five were stunted, 16% wasted and 23 % were underweight (NFHS-3, 2008). The recent global hunger index also seems unpromising as India ranks 55 among 76 countries and the situation is described to be 'serious' (Grebmer et al, 2014).

Malnutrition, influenced by economic (rising food prices), social (food taboos), environmental (poor sanitation/ hygiene) and individual (inadequate food intake) factors is an important concern in children under 6 years. Providing special nutrition support can prevent causing irreversible damages that affect their future potential. The ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) is a flagship welfare program of the Government of India that focuses primarily on early childhood development. In an effort to bridge the gap between the recommended calorie allowance and the average calorie intake of children, nutritional supplements and some food based nutrimixes are distributed to low income families. Currently, about 916 lakh people are receiving nutritional supplement through the ICDS (<http://wcd.nic.in/icds.htm>). Locally produced foods are culturally acceptable and have been successful in managing malnutrition in India for many decades (Prasad et al 2009). This was also supported by Dube et al, (2009) who compared the acceptability and energy intake of ready to use therapeutic foods (RUTF) and a cereal pulse based home preparation and reported that the home preparation had better acceptability.

Amrutham is one such supplement that is nutritious, ready to cook and distributed free of cost as a take home ration through anganwadi centres. The supplement consisting of wheat (45%), soyabean (6%), bengalgram (10%), groundnut (10%) and jaggery (25%) (<http://www.ruralhealthgoa2012.org>) is often prepared as porridges. However this is unappealing to children due to monotony in taste and unattractive appearance. It is not properly consumed, often wasted and used as poultry feed.

Making innovative preparations with amrutham nutrimix could pave way for its better use in future to overcome the problem of malnutrition. Hence the use of locally prepared health mixes like amrutham nutrimix as supplementary food will be an affordable, long-term solution to tackle the problem of undernutrition when compared to the WHO's (World Health Organization) RUTF that are both unaffordable and suited only for short-term use.

Hence an effort was made in this study to formulate nutritious amrutham based recipes and popularize it among young mothers to ensure its efficient use in children.

## Materials and Methods

### *Preparations using amrutham nutrimix*

In the present study, 20 common preparations were chosen. In all preparations, the multigrain amrutham powder was added as a substitute instead of the usually used single grain flours. The recipes were chosen based on the participants' familiarity with the recipes and availability of ingredients (Recipes available as supplementary file).

### *Amrutham nutrimix preparations:*

1. Amruth Kheer – A dessert made with coconut milk and nutrimix
2. Veg Roll - Fried mixed veggies and nutrimix roll
3. Kinnathappam – Coconut milk, sugar and nutrimix steamed cakes
4. Ela Ada - Nutrimix spread on banana leaf with a filling of coconut and jaggery
5. Kumbilappam – A mix of amrutham powder, coconut and jaggery wrapped in fresh bay leaf and steamed
6. Murrukku – A south Indian savory crunchy wheels made with nutrimix and cumin and sesame seeds
7. Kozhukkatai – Nutrimix dumpling with coconut and jaggery filling
8. Upma – A mild flavoured tiffin cooked as a thick porridge using nutrimix and mild seasonings
9. Halwa - Jaggery based sweet Indian dessert
10. Steam Cake – Colourful stacks of powdery nutrimix interlaced with layers of coconut and vegetables
11. Sweet Pidi – Nutrimix balls on thick sugar sweetened porridge
12. Onion Vada – Doughnut shaped deep fried snack with nutrimix and onion
13. Vattayappam - Fermented and steamed dish made with coconut and sugar
14. Idiappam – Nutrimix based steamed noodles topped with fresh coconuts
15. Sweet balls – Sweet balls with nutrimix, coconut and jaggery
16. Pakkavada- Crispy fried ribbons made with nutrimix
17. Idli – A staple fermented South Indian breakfast with nutrimix
18. Mixture – A savory made with extruded nutrimix and fried groundnuts
19. Chocolate shake – A nutrimix based chocolate flavoured milkshake
20. Special Cake- Nutrimix based cake baked with raisins

### *Selection of panel members*

All preparations were standardized in the laboratory. The standardized recipes were subjected to sensory evaluation by panel members that included young mothers. Though the products were intended for young children, they are not capable of scientific evaluation of the products. Hence, their mothers who are the primary care givers and are aware of the likes and dislikes of their children were chosen as panel members. The study was conducted in a semi urban anganwadi centre located in Kottayam District, Kerala, India. Among the 22 young mothers whose children attended the anganwadi centre, 10 were selected as panel members on the basis of their ability to differentiate between samples identified using the triangle test<sup>1</sup>. Willingness of the subjects to

participate in the taste panel was obtained. The mothers were in the age of 21 - 35 yrs and all belonged to the low socio economic strata.

### *Sensory evaluation*

A well designed score card was used to score all the products. The panel members were asked to evaluate the products on a five point scale for attributes like appearance, colour, texture, flavor and taste. The total scores of the products were calculated and the best six were identified by ANOVA.

### *Chemical analysis and Nutrient calculation of the selected preparations*

Nutritive value of the products for calories, protein, fat, carbohydrate,  $\beta$ -carotene, iron and calcium was computed using ICMR values (Gopalan et al, 2002). The protein and iron content of the best six products alone were analyzed using standard colorimetric procedures. Nutrient content of the nutrimix was taken from the nutritional information provided in the label. The cost of the products was also calculated to know its affordability.

### *Popularization of the products through nutrition education*

Mothers are always willing to change food behaviors for the welfare of their children. Hence the selected recipes were popularized among young mothers whose children attended the anganwadi centre. Nutrition education program was conducted to provide awareness about amrutham nutrimix as an important supplementary feed. All the dishes were displayed and method of preparation was explained to them in order to encourage its use in different preparations. Pre and post tests were done using a questionnaire that helped to assess their knowledge regarding supplementary feeds, amrutham nutrimix and its benefits. The impact of the education program was statistically analyzed by t-test.

## Results and Discussion

### *Organoleptic qualities of the developed products*

When the quality of food product is assessed by means of human sensory organs, the evaluation is said to be sensory or organoleptic. Sensory quality is a combination of different senses of perception coming into play in choosing and eating a food. Appearance, flavor and mouth feel decide the acceptance of the food (Srilakshmi, 2012).

Good appearance is an important pre-requisite of food acceptance. Among the twenty preparations, vegetable roll, mixture and pakkavada had the highest scores (4.96) for appearance. Vegetable roll was the most preferred dish with highest scores for colour (5.00), flavor (5.00), texture (4.93) and taste (5.00). The six best products selected by ANOVA were vegetable roll (4.97), mixture (4.9), onion vada (4.89), amruth kheer (4.87), ela ada (4.85) and sweet balls (4.82). The developed products obtained higher mean scores than the scores obtained for plain amrutham mix (3.8 out of 5,76% acceptability) as reported by Central Plantations Crop Research Institute (CPCRI), Kerala (<http://www.ruralhealthgoa2012.org>).

Table I shows the results of sensory evaluation of the developed products.

Table 1: Mean scores of sensory evaluation

Dishes	A	C	T	F	Taste	Mean
Sweet balls	4.76	4.7	4.83	4.86	4.96	4.82
Vegetable Roll	4.96	5	4.93	5	5	4.97
Ela Ada	4.83	4.86	4.86	4.8	4.9	4.85
Vattayappam	4.33	4.33	4.53	4.66	4.5	4.47
Kinnathappam	4.36	4.33	4.46	4.5	4.5	4.43
Kumbilappam	4.76	4.7	4.43	4.5	4.56	4.59
Murukku	4.83	4.83	4.76	4.66	4.83	4.78
Mixture	4.96	4.96	4.83	4.83	4.93	4.9
Pakkavada	4.96	4.96	4.76	4.8	4.76	4.84
Kozhukattai	4.4	4.4	4.46	4.43	4.56	4.45
Sweet Idli	4.26	4.36	4.13	4.2	4.3	4.25
Steam Cake	4.76	4.8	4.76	4.56	4.56	4.68
Uppuma	4.7	4.73	4.83	4.83	4.83	4.78
Onion Vada	4.93	4.93	4.76	4.9	4.93	4.89
Amruth Kheer	4.93	4.9	4.83	4.8	4.93	4.87
Idiappam	4.53	4.53	4.43	4.33	4.33	4.43
Chocolate shake	4.63	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.66
Special Cake	4.83	4.8	4.43	4.4	4.63	4.61
Special Halwa	4.83	4.87	4.77	4.73	4.47	4.73
Sweet Pidi	4.53	4.53	4.43	4.3	4.43	4.44

A: Appearance; C: Colour; T: Texture; F: Flavor;

Table 2: Nutrient content of selected preparations

Dishes	Energy (kcal/100g)	Protein (g/100g)	Fat (g/100g)	CHO (g/100g)	Calcium (mg/100gm)	Iron (mg/100g)	B-carotene (µg/100g)
Vegetable Roll	383	13.32*	3.30	47.05	126.99	2.83*	402.5
Onion Vada	400	13.85*	3.27	45.26	133.50	4.20*	202.8
Ela Ada	398	15.00*	10.5	63.8	147.3	4.16*	236.6
Mixture	503	23.58*	7.99	63.90	179.18	7.82*	307.9
Ladoo	376	24.83*	9.52	66.74	136.2	4.16*	202.8
AmruthKheer	310	26.23*	22.13	46.15	67.2	3.5*	98.4
Vattayappam	405.8	22.3	11.5	63.44	119.1	5.59	202.8
Kinnathappam	403.1	25.57	10.04	64.45	137.1	6.5	236.6
Kumbilappam	315	18.69	6.88	52.98	109.72	5.02	192.4
Murukku	395	35.68	5.44	68.04	191.23	8.9	338
Pakkavada	395	35.68	5.44	68.04	191.23	8.9	338
Kozhukatta	402.4	22.39	11.59	62.42	132.74	5.9	202.8
Sweet idli	395	35.68	5.44	68.04	191.23	8.9	338
Steam cake	264.95	15.96	10.55	33.33	132.94	4.64	970.7
Upma	356.9	19.65	11.17	41.68	112.2	5.21	353
Idiyappam	370.1	25.89	12.14	51.26	143.8	6.67	425.6
Chocolate shake	232	10.81	3.68	42.4	119.7	2.70	124.9
Special cake	409.4	29.14	5.44	83.08	179.3	7.19	272.9
Special halwa	313.3	11.75	12.83	42.58	103.7	2.86	363.3
Sweet pidi	405.8	22.3	11.58	63.44	320.7	8.45	202.5

\*Analyzed Values

Nutrient content of the selected recipes

The nutrient content of all the products is presented in Table 2.

Products like cake, pidi, vattayappam, kinnathappam and kozhukatta were the most calorie dense and provided more than 400 Kcals/100g. Murukku, pakkavada and sweet idli had the highest protein content of 35g/100g. The inclusion of coconut milk to amruth kheer made the product rich in fat (22g/100g) followed by halwa (12g) and pidi (11g). The calcium and iron content in sweet pidi was 320mg and 8.45mg/100g. Steam cake that included green leafy vegetables, carrots and beetroot had very high β-carotene content (970µg/100g). All the developed products contained nutrients that made an appreciable contribution to the daily recommended allowance of preschoolers.

Cost of the products

Almost all the products were prepared using low cost locally available ingredients which are affordable. Cost was calculated based on the prices of raw materials. The cost of the dishes ranges from 50 paise to Rs. 3 per 100 gm. Sweet balls was the most expensive (Rs.3) and idli, murukku, mixture and pakkavada (50 paise) were the least expensive dishes. Figure 1 and 2 shows the cost of the products.

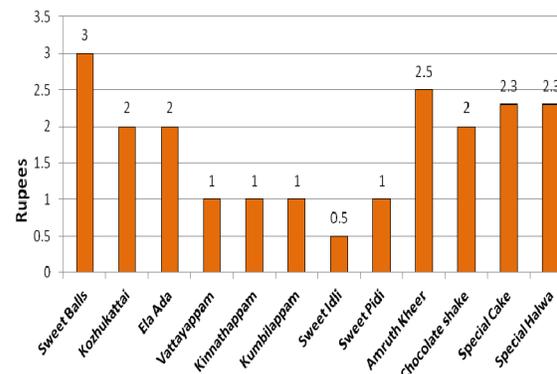


Figure 1: Costs of various prepared sweet dishes

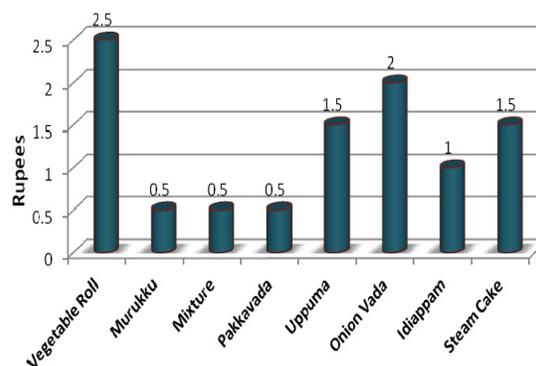


Figure 2: Costs of the prepared non-sweet dishes

### Popularization, nutrition education and its impact

Through the program, mothers were made aware about nutritional needs of children, occurrence and symptoms of malnutrition, need for supplementary foods to tackle malnutrition, amrutham nutrimix and its significance. The products prepared were displayed and popularized during the nutrition education session. A recipe book indicating the proportion of ingredients, method of preparation, yield and serving size was provided to all the participants. The pre and post test scores (Table 3) revealed that the awareness programme conducted was very effective in improving knowledge of the participants about amrutham nutrimix and its nutritional significance in children.

Table 3: Impact of nutrition education program

No. of subjects	Mean Pre-Test Scores	Mean Post-Test scores	t' value
20	30	44	2.7*

\* Significant at 5% (P<0.05)

### Conclusion

Supplementary feeding activities need to be better targeted towards those who need it most and help parents utilize the services effectively to improve their children's health and nutrition. Amrutham nutrimix, a highly nutritious supplement can help a long way in the treatment and prevention of undernutrition if utilized properly. This study shows that the mix can be incorporated or made into a variety of dishes rather than give it as just porridge. These products, being rich in calories and protein can also be used as a supplementary food for undernourished children. Participation of local self help groups or Kudumbasree units in the preparation and supply of these value added products as ready to eat (RTE) foods can minimize wastage and ensure better utilization by the beneficiaries. Such an arrangement can also empower women as an income generation activity.

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## Supplementary Information

### Amrutham nutrimix based recipes

#### Sweet balls

Ingredients	Amount
Amrutham powder	60 gm
Jaggery	25 gm
Grated coconut	15 gm
Cardamom powder	¼ tsp
Cashew nut	few

#### Method

Slightly roast amrutham powder. Make jaggery syrup, add grated coconut and roasted amrutham powder. Mix well and switch off the heat. Add cardamom powder, mix well and make into small balls. Garnish with nuts.

#### Vegetable roll

Ingredients	Amount
Amrutham powder	60 gm
Onion	10 gm
Carrot	10 gm
Potato	10 gm
Green peas	10 gm
Garam masala/ chilly powder	as required
Salt	to taste
Oil	for frying

#### Method

Saute vegetables with masala and salt in an oiled pan. To it, add amrutham powder and cook in enough water. Mix well and cook for five minutes. Allow to cool. Shape the mixture and roll in amrutham powder. Deep fry in hot oil till golden brown.

#### Ela Ada

Ingredients	Amount
Amrutham powder	70 gm
Jaggery	15 gm
Grated coconut	15 gm
Cumin seed powder	a pinch
Salt	as required

#### Method

Add roasted amrutham powder, salt, cumin seeds and mix with water to form thick dough. Spread it on small portions of plantain leaf. Make the stuffing by mixing jaggery and coconut gratings. Place the mixture in the centre of the leaf. Fold and steam for 10 mins.

#### Vattayappam

Ingredients	Amount
Amrutham powder	60 gm
Sugar	20 gm
Grated coconut	20 gm
Cumin seed	¼ tsp
Cardamom	few
Yeast	¼ tsp
Salt	to taste
Ghee	for greasing

#### Method

Roast amrutham powder and sieve it. Dissolve sugar in luke warm water and allow the yeast to rise. Make smooth batter with amrutham powder, yeast and sugar. Keep it aside for 4 hours or till it ferments into double its volume. Grind coconut, cumin seed and cardamom together. Mix with the fermented batter and salt. Pour the batter in to greased moulds and steam cook till done.

### Kinnathappam

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder	70 gm
Sugar	15 gm
Coconut milk	15 gm
Cumin seed	¼ tsp
Cardamom	few
Salt	to taste
Ghee	for greasing

#### *Method*

Roast amrutham powder and sieve it. Powder cumin seed and cardamom together and mix with amrutham powder. Add sugar, salt and coconut milk and make a thick batter. Pour the batter into greased moulds and steam cook till done.

### Kumbilappam

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder (roasted)	50 gm
Jaggery	10 gm
Grated coconut	10 gm
Plantain	30 gm
Elaichi	1 tsp
Salt	to taste
Bay leaf	for wrapping

#### *Method*

Mix all ingredients with water and make thick dough. Roll the bay leaf like a cone and fill it with the dough. Steam cook till done.

### Murukku

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder (sieved)	100 gm
Cumin powder	¼ tsp
Sesame	1 tsp
Chilli powder	1 tsp
Salt	to taste
Oil	for frying

#### *Method*

Knead amrutham powder with other ingredients and make smooth thick dough. Heat oil in a pan. Fill the dough in a murukku press and squeeze the dough in round pattern over a greased plate. Drop it gently into hot oil. Deep fry till light brown and place it on tissue.

### Mixture

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder	90 gm
Chilli powder	1 tsp
Groundnut (roasted)	10gm
Curry leaves	as required
Salt	to taste
Oil	for frying

#### *Method*

Knead amrutham powder, chilli powder, salt and water to thick dough. Heat oil in a pan. Place some dough in the mixture mould and squeeze out in to hot oil. Deep fry it till crisp and drain excess oil. Garnish with fried groundnuts and curry leaves

### Pakkavada

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder	100 gm
Sesame	1 tsp

Chilli powder	1 tsp
Asafoetida (soaked in water)	to taste
Salt	to taste
Oil	for frying

#### *Method*

Knead amrutham powder with other ingredients to make smooth dough. Place some dough in pakkavada mould and squeeze into hot oil. Deep fry till light brown and garnish with fried curry leaves.

### Kozhukattai

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder (roasted)	60 gm
Jaggery	20 gm
Grated coconut	20 gm
Cumin powder	a pinch
Salt	to taste

#### *Method*

Mix amrutham, salt and cumin powder together. Add hot water slowly and make into soft dough. Roll into equal sized balls and flatten it with hands. Place coconut-jaggery mixture in the centre and make into balls. Steam for 10mins.

### Sweet idli

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder (roasted)	100 gm
Salt	to taste
Yeast (soaked)	½ tsp

#### *Method*

Make a very smooth paste with Amrutham powder. Add salt and yeast. Leave it overnight for fermentation. Grease idli plates and pour batter. Steam cook till done.

### Steam cake

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder (roasted)	40 gm
Grated Coconut	20 gm
Amaranth leaves (chopped)	10 gm
Grated Carrot	15 gm
Grated Beetroot	15 gm
Salt	to taste

#### *Method:*

Add salt to the roasted Amrutham powder. Add water little by little and mix till it gets wet enough for steaming. Put some coconut to the puttu mould, add Amrutham powder, chopped amaranth leaves, carrot, beetroot and coconut one layer after another. Close the lid and steam for 2 minutes.

### Uppuma

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder (roasted)	50 gm
Onion	10 gm
Chopped Carrot	10 gm
Chopped Beans	10 gm
Grated coconut	20 gm
Ginger and green chilly chopped	1 tsp
Mustard	1/ tsp
Curry leaves/coriander leaves	as required
Salt	to taste
Oil	for sautéing

#### *Method:*

Heat oil in a pan. Add mustard seeds and sauté ginger, chilly, onion, carrot, beans and curry leaves. Pour half cup water to it and add salt. When water boils, sprinkle the fried Amrutham powder. Stir well to prevent lumps. Add coconut. Cover with the lid and cook it for few minutes. Garnish with coriander leaves.

**Onion vada**

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder	60 gm
Onion	40 gm
Green chilly, ginger (chopped)	1 tsp
Curry leaves	as required
Salt	to taste
Oil	for frying

*Method*

Mix sautéed onion, salt and curry leaves to the Amrutham powder. Make it into thick dough with water. Place some dough on wet plantain leaf. Flatten with hand and make a hole in the centre. Slide the vada into hot oil. Fry till golden brown. Serve hot.

**Amruth kheer**

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder	60 gm
Sugar	20 gm
Coconut milk	200 ml (from 25 gm coconut)
Cardamom powder	¼ tsp
Ghee	10 gm
Cashew nut & raisins	few

*Method*

Dry roast amrutham powder in a thick bottomed pan. Add water and cook till done. Add milk and sugar and boil for 5 mins. Fry nuts and raisins in ghee and add to the kheer. Sprinkle cardamom powder and mix well. Serve hot.

**Idiyappam**

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder	70 gm
Grated coconut	20 gm
Grated carrot	10 gm
Salt	to taste

*Method*

Add hot water and salt to the Amrutham powder and knead to form smooth dough. Put little of the dough to the idiyappam press. Grease idli plate and press the dough in to it. Add coconut and grated carrot on top. Steam for 5-10 minutes.

**Chocolate shake**

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder (roasted)	30gm
Sugar	20 gm
Whole milk	50 ml
Cardamom powder	¼ tsp
Cashew nuts	few
Chocolate powder	3 tsp

*Method*

Blend all ingredients together in a mixer and serve chilled.

**Special cake**

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder	80 gm
Sugar	20 gm
Milk	20 ml
Egg	2 Nos
Butter	5 tsp
Cashew nut & raisins	few

*Method*

Beat butter and sugar together till fluffy. Whisk the eggs. Fold the amrutham powder with egg and butter mix. Pour in a greased vessel and steam for 45 minutes.

**Special Halwa**

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder	30 gm
Sugar	20 gm
Milk	30 ml
Carrot puree	10 gm
Cardamom powder	¼ tsp
Cashew nut & raisins	few
Ghee	10 gm

*Method*

Mix milk and amrutham powder without any lumps and boil with constant stirring. When the mixture thickens, add carrot puree and sugar and mix well. Add ghee and keep stirring till mixture leaves the sides of the pan. Garnish with fried nuts and raisins.

**Sweet pidi**

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Amrutham powder	60 gm
Sugar	20 gm
Coconut	20 gm
Cumin powder	¼ tsp
Salt	to taste

*Method*

To the Amrutham powder, add ground coconut, cumin powder and mix well to make a dough. Take half of the dough and roll in to small balls. Add more hot water to the rest of the dough and cook till it reaches thick liquid consistency. Add the small balls to the liquid and cook for 5 minutes. Serve hot

**Note:** The recipes contained in this supplementary material are to be followed exactly as written. The publisher is not responsible for your specific health or allergy needs that may require medical supervision. The publisher is not responsible for any adverse reactions to the recipes contained in this supplementary material.