

Aloe Vera Health Benefits

Authored by: **Administrator** [help@knowledgebase-script.com]

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Aloe Vera is popular as a topical remedy for skin conditions like acne, burns, herpes and wounds. When consumed internally, it also provides relief against constipation and diabetes.

Aloe Vera Origin

Aloe is a coarse perennial with a short stem and shallow root system. The leaves are fleshy with horny prickles on the margins, and the flowers are yellow in colour. We use the juice from these leaves. It is grown in most subtropical and tropical areas like South Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Aloe Vera's Medicinal Properties

Aloe is bitter, cooling, anthelmintic, carminative, diuretic, stomachic and emmenagogue. In clinical studies, it was found to greatly inhibit the gastric acid secretion, and is used to protect gastric mucosa from Hcl-induced gastric tension. The aqueous extract of aloe also exhibited anti parasitic activity against trichomonas vaginalis, a vaginal infection.

Aloe Vera's Home Remedies

It is used to treat the following conditions:

1. **Natural Acne Remedy** - The redness, the flaky skin and the swelling associated with acne, they can all be treated with regular use of aloe vera juice or gel. Apply aloe vera gel to moisturize the face and avoid the use of oil based lotions. Spread the gel on the acne and allow it to settle on the skin. At night, try to use an aloe mask and leave it for a couple of minutes.
2. **Constipation Cure** - The dried latex from the inner lining of the leaf is used by some people as an oral laxative. The dried latex contain a chemical called anthroquinone glycosides and it stimulates the bile flow and repair the digestive system. Doctors caution against using Aloe juice for constipation as it can cause diarrhea and stomach contractions in some individuals.
3. **Diabetic Home Remedy** - Aloe juice is believed to lower blood sugar levels in people with type 2 diabetes. Aloe contains two chemicals - mannose and glucomannon; mannose helps open up the blood vessels and glucomannon helps in triglyceride production.
4. **Soothing Heart-Burn Relief** - Aloe Vera eases heartburn, soothes the esophagus and smoothens other gastrointestinal issues. Ensure the aloe vera juice is for internal use and does not contain aloe latex, aloin, or aloe-emoin compounds as they are laxating in nature.
5. **Aloe Heals Wounds And Burns** - Boil aloe leaves and take the fleshy part of the inside of the leaves to use as a poultice over wounds. Aloe gel can be used for the same purpose. Aloe contains active compounds that can decrease pain and inflammation and stimulate skin growth and repair. You could also mix powdered cumin seeds with aloe juice and apply periodically over the area. It will reduce the burning, hasten healing and prevent scar formation.
6. **Soothing On Skin/Hair Dryness** - Aloe is a very good moisturizer and can be added to creams and shampoos to provide additional protection. One easy trick is to add some aloe gel/juice into your bath soaps and shampoos to provide for a softening effect on your skin and hair.
7. **Treatment For Herpes** - Try to purchase gels that have a high percentage of aloe vera. Some of the commercial moisturizers just have traces of aloe in them. It can help the lesions heal faster than traditional hydrocortisone creams.

Aloe Vera's Side Effects

If you are taking aloe for oral consumption, ensure that it is food-grade. If you are taking it for constipation, the bowels may become dependent on aloe if it is used often. Avoid aloe if you are pregnant, nursing, or suffering from irritable bowel syndrome, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, or gastritis.