



honey for health

*Honey's the natural
way to better health.*



Honey - It's an Original



Honey, well known as nature's original sweetener, is being rediscovered as a natural way to better health. Honey has always been prized for its delicious sweetness and flavor, but did you know that throughout the centuries it's also been valued for therapeutic and medicinal uses?

- Physicians in ancient Rome used honey to help their patients fall asleep.
- Hippocrates, the Greek physician, praised honey's healing powers and formulated many honey-based cures for ailments like skin disorders, ulcers and sores.
- The ancient Egyptians used honey to treat cataracts, open wounds, cuts and burns.
- In World War I, German doctors used honey mixed with cod liver oil to surgically dress soldiers' wounds sustained in battle.
- For years, opera singers have used honey to boost their energy and soothe their throats before performances.



The Latest Scientific Buzz

In a recent review of related literature, Dr. Susan Percival of the University of Florida's Food Science and Human Nutrition Department found that honey contains antioxidants and, though in trace amounts, a wide array of vitamins, minerals and amino acids. Microbiologist Richard Stier,

conducting a separate literature review, has also found that honey's unique composition makes it an effective antimicrobial agent, useful for treating minor burns and scrapes, and for aiding treatment of sore throats and other bacterial infections.

- A spoonful of honey added to hot tea is a great way to soothe a sore throat.



Vitamins, Minerals and Amino Acids in Every Bite

"When you consider that the source of honey is floral nectars, it's not surprising to learn that honey contains a wide array of vitamins, such as vitamin B6, thiamin, niacin, riboflavin and pantothenic acid," says Dr. Percival. "Essential minerals, such as calcium, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, sodium and zinc are also found in honey."

In addition, several different amino acids have been identified in honey. Although these vitamins, minerals and amino acids appear in trace amounts and vary in amount by floral source, they contribute to your overall nutrition intake. It is the exceptionally wide variety of vitamins, minerals and amino acids that is most exciting.

- Use honey to sweeten your oatmeal or high-fiber cereal.
- Stir honey into peanut butter and use as a dip for carrots or celery.



Antioxidant Benefits



Whether you stir honey into your tea or coffee, spread it on toast or enjoy it by the spoonful, you can feel good about boosting your daily supply of antioxidants with each delicious mouthful.

“Antioxidants perform the role of eliminating free radicals, which are reactive compounds in our bodies,” says Dr. Percival. “Free radicals are created through the normal process of metabolism and are believed to contribute to many serious diseases when left unchecked.” Honey contains several compounds that function as antioxidants, one of which is unique to honey called pinocembrin.

- Stir a spoonful of honey into your morning citrus juice or drizzle it over a grapefruit half.
- Replace your second cup of coffee with green tea sweetened with honey.

A Quick Source of Energy

If you feel a boost of energy after eating honey, you're not imagining it! “Honey is a natural mixture of the simple sugars glucose and fructose. Recent studies suggest that this unique mixture of sugars works best in preventing fatigue and enhancing athletic performance,” says Dr. Percival.

- Stir a spoonful of honey into a glass of water before heading out for your morning jog or trip to the gym.
- Add honey and fresh fruit to yogurt for a power-packed snack.



Antimicrobial Benefits



The next time you have a minor burn or scrape, reach for your honey squeeze bear. Honey is an effective antimicrobial agent. Antimicrobial agents inhibit the growth of certain bacteria, yeast and molds. Honey is antimicrobial for many reasons, including its high sugar content, which limits the amount of water available to microorganisms for growth; its relatively high acidity (low pH); and its low protein content, which deprives bacteria of nitrogen needed for growth. The presence in honey of hydrogen peroxide and the antioxidants honey contains also inhibit bacterial growth. When used to treat minor skin injuries, honey's hygroscopic nature, that is, its ability to draw moisture from the air, promotes healing, helps prevent scarring and keeps the injured area from adhering to the bandage.

- Apply honey directly to minor cuts, scrapes and burns to help prevent infection. Applying honey and bandaging will promote faster healing and may help prevent scarring.

Honey for Keeps



Always store honey at room temperature, never in the refrigerator. Keep a jar handy in the kitchen and another in the bathroom.

If your honey becomes cloudy or granular, part of honey's natural process of crystallization, you can easily restore it to a liquid state. Simply place the honey jar

in warm water and stir until the crystals dissolve. Or place the honey in a microwave-safe container with the lid removed and microwave on HIGH (100%), stirring every 30 seconds, until the crystals dissolve.

Many Sources



There are approximately 300 varieties of honey in the United States. Because of the variety of floral sources from which honey originates, no two honeys are exactly alike in flavor. In general, lighter-colored honeys are milder in flavor while darker-colored honeys are bolder in flavor. Darker honeys also tend to have a higher mineral content and antioxidant potential.

Most honey in the United States is bought in liquid form. Creme or whipped honey, which is actually finely crystallized honey, is also widely available. The crystallization is controlled during processing so that the honey will remain creamy and spreadable at room temperature. Also watch for comb honey, which can be enjoyed like chewing gum, at farmers' markets and health food stores. Some markets also sell honey "sticks" – drinking-type straws filled with honey and sealed at the ends. They're great on-the-go energy boosters or use them to sweeten hot tea.



Note: Honey should not be fed to babies under one year of age. Honey is a safe and wholesome food for older children and adults.