

How To Use Raw Honey As Medicine



Honey has a long medicinal history dating back to the wound-dressing of ancient Egyptians. Today, many people swarm to honey for its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. And holistic practitioners consider it one of nature's best all-around remedies. Here is what researchers are learning about honey's health benefits:

Wound Care

Manuka honey is sometimes used to treat chronic leg ulcers and pressure sores. Manuka honey is made in New Zealand from the nectar of *Leptospermum scoparium*. It's the basis of Medihoney, which the FDA approved in 2007 for use in treating wounds and skin ulcers. It works very well to stimulate healing. It is Manuka honey's pH content, which leans toward acidic, that helps the healing process. It is soothing and feels good to the wound.

The Common Cold

Buckwheat honey-based syrup can be used to ease the early symptoms of a cold. It calms inflamed membranes and eases a cough — the latter claim supported by a few studies. In a study that involved 139 children, honey beat out dextromethorphan (a cough suppres-



Researchers: Valentine's Chocolate Is Good for You

By Sylvia Booth Hubbard

When Richard Cadbury created the first heart-shaped box filled with chocolate candy for Valentine's Day back in 1861, he had no idea he was packaging a treat that would be proven to have many health benefits 150 years later. Contemporary lovers know a Valentine's heart filled with dark chocolate is more than just a symbol of a gift of love, but, in moderation, it can be a gift of health.

Modern science has discovered that chocolate — and the darker the better — can diminish the risk of:

Cardiovascular disease: Numerous studies indicate that chocolate can be a valuable weapon against cardiovascular disease. An eight-year German study of almost 20,000 people found those who ate an average of about two ounces of chocolate each day reduced their risk of both heart attacks and strokes by 39 percent. A review of seven studies found a

sant) and diphenhydramine (an antihistamine) in easing nighttime cough in children and improving their sleep. Another study involving 105 children found that buckwheat honey trumped dextromethorphan in suppressing nighttime coughs.

If you're suffering from a cold or something going on in the throat or upper airways, getting on board with honey syrup will help fight infection and soothe membranes. Buckwheat honey-based allergy medicine is also recommended for the same purpose.

Diabetes

Even if honey is natural, it is no better than ordinary white or brown sugar for dieters or people with diabetes. A tablespoon of honey, in fact, has more carbohydrates and calories than granulated white or brown sugar. 'A sugar is a sugar' when it comes to diabetes. I think it's a widespread myth that honey is better for diabetes. Some patients don't classify honey as a sugar. Get your carbs from a cup of fresh berries or a carton of yogurt because they have about the same number of carbs as a tablespoon of honey — but less sugar. There are some minerals and vitamins and antioxidant properties in honey — the darker the honey, the higher the level of antioxidants — but with yogurt, you can also get those benefits. When you have diabetes, you have to be picky and choosy about carbs and calories.

Antibacterial Honey?

In the laboratory, honey has been shown to hamper the growth of food-borne pathogens such as *E. coli* and salmonella, and to fight certain bacteria, including *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, both of which are common in hospitals and doctors' offices. But whether it does the same in people hasn't been proven.

Shop for honey and you'll see that some are lighter, others are darker. In general, the darker the honey, the

29 percent reduced risk of stroke in those who ate chocolate more than twice a week, and a Swedish study found that women who ate more than 1.5 ounces of chocolate a week decreased their risk of stroke by 20 percent when compared to women who ate less than a third of an ounce every week. A 10-year Australian study found that women over the age of 70 who ate chocolate at least once a week were 60 percent less likely to die from heart failure during the study. Compounds in chocolate have been shown to improve circulation and to have blood-thinning properties.

Dementia: A study published in the American Heart Association's journal *Hypertension* found that the flavanols found in cocoa give the brain a boost. Elderly participants with mild cognitive impairment who drank a dairy-based cocoa flavanol drink for eight weeks showed a significant improvement in memory. Researchers believe flavanols may work by protecting neurons from injury and improving the interaction of molecular structures involved in memory as well as by increasing blood flow.

Obesity: Researchers at the University of California, San Diego, found that people who ate chocolate five times a week had a decrease in body mass index (BMI) even when they ate more calories than those who didn't eat chocolate. "The study is provocative and confirms what we have been calling the chocolate/obesity paradox: Despite chocolate's high caloric load, its regular intake does not result in weight gain," Dr. Franz Messerli, Director of Hypertension program at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital in New York, told ABC News. "Thus, to put it pointedly, chocolate could be called a lazy man's exercise," said Messerli, who was not involved in the study. The researchers believe that antioxidants

better its antibacterial and antioxidant power. Honey comes in many varieties, depending on the floral source of pollen or nectar gathered and regurgitated by the honey bee upon arrival in the hive.

Honey producers may apply to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for a grade on their product, but the score does not account for color. Rather, the honey is judged for clarity, aroma, and flavor, and the absence of sediments, such as honeycomb particles. Never Give Honey to an Infant

Honey is natural and considered harmless for adults. But pediatricians strongly caution against feeding honey to children under 1 year old.

"Do not let babies eat honey," states foodsafety.gov, a web site of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

That's because of the risk of botulism. The spores of the botulism bacteria are found in dust and soil that may make their way into honey. Infants do not have a developed immune system to defend against infection. It's been shown very clearly that honey can give infants botulism, a paralytic disorder in which the infant must be given anti-toxins and often be placed on a respirator in an intensive care unit. But parents may feed their infants cereals that contain honey. If it's cooked, so it's OK—we're talking about honey out of the bottle.

The National Honey Board, which the USDA oversees, also agrees that infants should not be given honey. "The concern for babies stems from the fact that infants lack the fully developed gastrointestinal tract of older humans," the Board's web site states.

By Felicia Vance, BDO Contributing Writer

called catechins improve lean muscle mass and reduce weight.

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Diabetes: An Italian study found that eating chocolate regularly accelerates the body's ability to metabolize glucose, thus increasing insulin sensitivity and reducing the risk for diabetes. Cocoa powder is rich in flavonoids, say researchers, which help counteract insulin resistance, the condition that prevents your body from using insulin effectively.

Depression: Chocolate contains phenethylamine (PEA), the same chemical your body creates when you fall in love. PEA activates the brain's pleasure center and triggers the release of "feel good" endorphins. Chocolate also reduces stress due to the compound anadamide which stimulates the same receptors in the brain as marijuana.

Earlier death: British researchers found that people who eat candy live almost a year longer than those who don't indulge in the sweet treat. Experts believe the life-lengthening effect is due to the antioxidants in chocolate.

Coughs: Chocolate contains theobromine, which calms the vagus nerve, the part of the brain that triggers coughs. A British study of 300 patients with a nagging cough found that 60 percent of them got relief when given the amount of theobromine found in two ounces of unsweetened chocolate. An earlier study found that theobromine was more effective at suppressing coughs than codeine. Theobromine also hardens tooth enamel, which lowers your risk of cavities.