8 MIRACULOUS HEALING USES FOR APPLE CIDER VINEGAR (NO. 2 ALONE COULD SAVE MILLIONS OF LIVES)

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Golden brown and slightly hazy from the fine fibers floating inside, apple cider vinegar may seem unimpressive at first glance. From thousands of years, however, this unassuming panacea has been used to combat a wide variety of health problems.

And while not every Internet claim can be substantiated, scientific research continues to reveal legitimate ways vinegar can contribute to a healthier life, including the following eight great uses:

1. Treating ear infections

Few things are as painful as an ear infection. If you're looking for relief for adults, though, the answer may be as close as your kitchen cabinet. Daily irrigating the ear with vinegar can kill off infection-causing germs, while also helping to dry out the ear canal. Some studies even suggest the treatment may be more effective than antibiotic drops when it comes to easing ear aches, although it does come with the potential for canal irritation that some participants said caused pain and dizziness.

2. Improving cardiovascular health

While so far the research connecting heart-health and vinegar remains somewhat inconclusive, some studies suggest that regularly ingesting modest amounts of vinegar may be good for your circulatory system's star player. For example, researchers found that rats who received vinegar had lower blood pressure than their peers who were only given water. A different study found that participants who regularly consumed an oil and vinegar salad dressing also saw a lower risk of heart disease compared to the control group.

3. Reducing cancer risk

Apple cider vinegar is rich in the same polyphenols that have given wine and chocolate their new-found status as health foods. Known to combat against oxidative stress, these amazing molecules may even decrease the risk of developing certain forms of cancer.

4. Controlling glucose levels

Perhaps the most exciting research related to vinegar has to do with glucose control. Multiple studies have shown it to have an antiglycemic effect — that is, it reduced the glucose response to carbohydrates when taken before a meal.

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While scientists aren't entirely sure why it works, there is some evidence to suggest vinegar may actually slow the progress of diabetes and ultimately provide important benefits to insulin-resistant individuals.

5. Relieving jellyfish stings

Image source: Wikimedia

A jellyfish sting is a fast way to ruin a pleasant day in the water. If you've been stung, vinegar should be an important part of your first response. Before attempting to remove any remaining tentacles, douse the site in vinegar. The acetic acid in vinegar deactivates any nematocysts (the dart-like cells that inject the venom) that haven't already fired, preventing them from discharging additional venom into the victim. While urine or warm water can also be used, vinegar has the advantage of being readily available (no waiting for water to heat up) and highly sanitary (no rinsing yourself in someone else's urine).

6. Losing weight

Vinegar may even provide a helpful boost when it comes to weight loss. Studies show that people who ingest vinegar in the morning go on to consume fewer calories during the day. They also tend to feel more full after meals and are less prone to between-meal hunger.

7. Cleaning produce

Everybody knows it's important to eat lots of fruit and vegetables, but the very same leafy greens that are so good for your body are also favorite hiding places for illness-causing bacteria, like Listeria and E. Coli. Thankfully, the apple cider vinegar you already have in your pantry can be an easy solution to the invisible bad guys hanging out on your veggies. Because of its renowned antimicrobial properties, apple cider vinegar easily does a better job than water alone when it comes to cleaning produce, and is nearly on-par with chemical-based cleaners. Even with notoriously difficult-to-clean produce like lettuce and strawberries, studies have shown that vinegar is at least 90 percent successful at removing potentially dangerous microbes.

8. Caring for dentures

Keeping dentures clean isn't only important for cosmetic reasons. Tiny micro-pores in the seemingly smooth surfaces of dentures can easily harbor dangerous microbes, which can cause not only oral disease, but systemic diseases as well. Simply brushing generally isn't enough to keep these mouth-based bacteria at bay — dentures require a good soak on a regular basis. Rather than relying on fizzing tablets from the drugstore, consider using vinegar instead. Both bleach and vinegar have been found to be as effective as their effervescent stand-bys, but vinegar has the added benefit of not leaving behind harmful residue the way bleach can.

While apple cider vinegar is typically kept in a kitchen pantry, it has such a wide range of health-related uses, you may be tempted to keep it in the medicine cabinet instead. Inexpensive, natural, and readily available, incorporating it into your solutions for common problems can be a simple step towards a healthier life.