

# Healing Properties of Honey

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[American Apitherapy Society](#) - A non-profit membership organization devoted to advancing the investigation and promoting the use of honey bee products to further good health and to treat a variety of conditions and diseases.

- Honey has been known for its healing properties for thousands of years - the Ancient Greeks used it, and so have many other peoples through the ages. Even up to the second world war, honey was being used for its antibacterial properties in treating wounds. But with the advent of penicillin and other antibiotic drugs in the twentieth century, honey's medicinal qualities have taken a back seat. But that might be about to change.
- Maybe Winnie the Pooh had the right idea after all! Most people think of honey as something that is to be spread on bread, but few realize the many uses it has. Its unique properties mean that it is found in foods, cosmetics, and it even has a place in health care and healing.
- Treatment with honey is called *apitherapy*, which includes replenishing energy, enhancing physical stamina and improving immune systems. Honey also is considered to have a calming effect on the mind and promotes sleep. Honey also helps indigestion and has sometimes been used to treat cardiovascular disease and respiratory complaints. A thin coat of honey can be applied on the skin to disinfect and heal minor skin wounds and chapped lips.
- Australian researchers have revealed the secret explanation for the deadly bug-killing properties of honey. Researcher, Shona Blair from the University of Sydney has found that, when diluted honey is applied to a moist wound, it produces hydrogen peroxide, a known anti-bacterial agent. The research has also revealed that honey is powerful even against drug-resistant hospital killer golden staph *Staphylococcus aureus*.
- Honey consumption may have a positive effect on factors associated with heart disease risk. Specifically, honey appears to lower C-reactive protein and may have a lesser impact on blood glucose, insulin, and lipid levels compared to glucose or a honey analogue particularly in diabetic and/or hyperlipidemic subjects.
- Although honey's healing benefits were known to Muslims more than a thousand years ago, scientists are just now beginning to research its amazing powers. Indeed, Peter Molan, biochemist at the University of Waikato (New Zealand) has - for the past 17 years

- researched into the healing properties of honey and has shown scientifically that all honeys have varying degrees of such properties (Molan, p.1). Honey contains many minerals and vitamins beneficial to man. However, one of the most important properties seems to be its antibiotic action.

- The bee assimilates juices of various kinds of flowers and fruit and forms within its body the honey, which it stores in its cells of wax. Only a couple of centuries ago man came to know that honey comes from the belly of the bee. This fact was mentioned in the QUR'AN 1,400 years ago in the following verse: "*And thy Lord taught the Bee to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in (men's) habitations; There issues From within their bodies A drink of varying colours, Wherein is healing for men.*" [AL-QUR'AN 16:68-69]
- The use of honey as medicine is mentioned in the most ancient written records. Today scientists and doctors are rediscovering the effectiveness of honey as a wound treatment. Peter Molan, Ph.D., Professor of Biochemistry at Waikato University, New Zealand has been on the forefront of honey research for 20 years. He heads the university's Honey Research Unit, which is internationally recognized for its expertise in the antimicrobial properties of honey. Clinical observations and experimental studies have established that honey has effective antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. It painlessly removes pus, scabs and dead tissue from wounds and stimulates new tissue growth.
- Honey creates a moist healing environment that allows skin cells to regrow across a healing wound flush with the surface of the wound, preventing deformity of the skin. (If a dry scab forms on a wound, the skin cells can only grow across the wound deeper down where it is moist.)
- Honey has been used as a medicine since ancient times. Because of its antimicrobial properties, honey has the potential to combat oral pathogens and holds promise for the treatment of periodontal disease, mouth ulcers, and other diseases of the oral cavity.
- The use of honey as a wound dressing material, an ancient remedy that has been rediscovered, is becoming of increasing interest as more reports of its effectiveness are published. The clinical observations recorded are that infection is rapidly cleared, inflammation, swelling and pain are quickly reduced, odour is reduced, sloughing of necrotic tissue is induced, granulation and epithelialisation are hastened, and healing occurs rapidly with minimal scarring. The antimicrobial properties of honey prevent microbial growth in the moist healing environment created. Unlike other topical antiseptics, honey causes no tissue damage: in animal studies it has been demonstrated histologically that it actually promotes the healing process.
- People have been using honey as a home remedy for thousands of years. Now scientists have found that certain types of honey may prevent infection when applied directly to a wound. Researchers say an enzyme in the honey turns into hydrogen peroxide when combined with bodily fluids, such as blood. That helps disinfect wounds and prevent infection.

- By studying the way bacteria protect themselves from attack by forming slimy clumps, scientists have discovered that honey may be an effective new weapon in breaking up the microbes' defenses. The researchers from the School of Applied Sciences at UWIC looked at the dangerous infections that commonly get into wounds, such as Pseudomonas bacteria.
- The stimulation of healing may also be due to the acidity of honey. The osmosis creates a solution of honey in contact with the wound surface which prevents the dressing sticking, so there is no pain or tissue damage when dressings are changed.
- Honey has been used as a therapeutic agent since ancient times for "disorders" ranging from baldness to gastrointestinal distress. During the early part of the 20th century, researchers began to document the wound healing properties of honey. The introduction of antibiotics in the 1940's temporarily stymied honey's use. Nonetheless, concerns regarding antibiotic resistance and renewed interest in "natural" remedies has promoted a resurgence of interest in the antimicrobial and wound healing properties of honey.
- Honey has been used to treat infections in a wide range of wound types. These include burns, venous leg ulcers, leg ulcers of mixed aetiology, diabetic foot ulcers, pressure ulcers, unhealed graft donor sites, abscesses, boils, pilonidal sinuses, infected wounds from lower limb surgery, necrotising fasciitis and neonatal postoperative wound infection. In many of these and other cases, honey has been used to heal wounds not responding to treatment with conventional antibiotics and antiseptics.
- We are now aware that honey has a healing property and also a mild antiseptic property. The Russians used honey to cover their wounds in World War II. The wound would retain moisture and would leave very little scar tissue. Due to the density of honey, no fungus or bacteria would grow in the wound. A person suffering from an allergy of a particular plant may be given honey from that plant so that the person develops resistance to that allergy.
- Honey could be the new antibiotic, according to scientific research from the University of Wales Institute Cardiff (UWIC) presented Monday, 06 September 2004 at the Society for General Microbiology's 155th Meeting at Trinity College Dublin.
- Most people think of honey as the sweet, sticky stuff you put on toast or drop into hot tea, but in recent years, researchers have been exploring its potential in other ways. Some of these include: to lessen the ill effects of radiation therapy in patients with cancer of the head and neck, to improve oral health, to preserve food, to boost antioxidants, to enhance athletic performance.
- Apitherapy, the treatment of various conditions using honeybee products, has been

around a long time. Honey is one of the oldest medicines we have, with proof of its healing power dating back more than 5000 years. Even Hippocrates found that honey "cleans sores and ulcers of the lips, heals carbuncles and running sores." It has been a staple ingredient of folk medicines throughout the ages and now, it is even gaining credibility with current medical and scientific communities. British researchers have proven that applying raw honey to fresh wounds prevents infection as well as any medication and often eliminates the need for antibiotics. They have also learned that honey-treated cuts and scrapes heal quicker than those treated with medicated ointments. Other researchers have found that honey can alleviate asthma, calm nerves and induce sleep, ease pain and relieve diarrhea.

- Humans have used honey for more than 8,000 years according to documented sources. This natural sweetener has been used for everything from healing wounds to soothing coughs.
- A number of properties inherent to honey might contribute to its ability to fight infection and promote healing. Its high sugar content allows it to draw infection and fluid from wounds by a process called 'osmosis.' Honey prevents bacterial growth through its acidic pH and through the work of an enzyme that produces small amounts of hydrogen peroxide. Its ability to keep the area around a wound moist and protected promotes fast healing and prevents scarring.
- According to John Riddle, professor of ancient science at North Carolina State University, a medical text written on papyrus from 3000 years B.C. specifies the use of honey for head wounds. He says that perhaps "the honey helped prevent swelling and sealed off the wound to keep air and infection out."
- Throughout the centuries, honey has held a place in popular culture. Besides the stories of that beloved bear Pooh, always pursuing the ever elusive honey pot, Greek mythology tells of a tale in which the life of Zeus is saved by bees feeding him honey. Though it is technically not much different than table sugar, there seem to be healing properties hidden in its gooey goodness.
- Honey has been used for 5,000 years to treat burns, coughs and ulcers. It is a natural antiseptic and makes a good salve for burns and wounds. Honey's high sugar content kills many kinds of bacteria, including some antibiotic-resistant germs. Honey also forms a moist environment, which speeds healing of wounds and minimizes scarring.
- Scientists claim to have discovered that honey can be used as a natural remedy to hospital infection "superbugs" which are resistant to strong antibiotics.
- Studies have been done world over which show that wounds treated with pure natural honey heal faster and better. Honey is particularly useful in treating all kinds of burns

and wounds that have been there for a long time due to disease e.g. diabetes, insect bites, animal bites and skin disease. It has been found to work fast with no side-effects and many doctors and nurses recommend it for such wounds.