

Aloe vera (Aloe barbadensis)

Aloe vera benefits

Aloe vera is one of the only known natural vegetarian sources of Vitamin B12, and it contains many minerals vital to the growth process and healthy function of all the body's systems. Numerous studies worldwide indicate that aloe vera is a general tonic for the immune system, helping it to fight illness of all kinds. Various research studies are underway to explore the potential of aloe vera components to boost immunity and combat the HIV virus, and to treat certain types of cancer (particularly leukemia). It may even have a role to play in managing diabetes.

Over 200 worldwide scientific research papers have been published on the effects of Aloe vera. The three main categories of research include anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, and anti-viral actions of Aloe vera. The juice is said to soothe digestive tract irritations such as colitis, ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome. Aloe's ability to encourage the release of pepsin (a gastric juice enzyme necessary for digestion) when the stomach is full is a possible reason for its ulcer-healing effects (Journal of the American Osteopathic Society, 1963, vol.62). In one study, oral use of Aloe for six months helped mitigate asthma symptoms in almost half of the participants. Eleven of twenty-seven patients studied who drank Aloe reported feeling better at the end of the study. Researchers think that results might be due to stimulation of the immune system, as well as naturally occurring anti-inflammatory agents in Aloe vera.

In 1994, the US Food and Drug Administration approved Aloe vera for the treatment of HIV. On-going studies worldwide show that Aloe taken in highly concentrated doses can stimulate the production of white blood cells that may help fight viruses and also tumours.

Aloe vera contains protein, calcium, magnesium, zinc, vitamins A, B12 and E, essential fatty acids and is naturally rich in:

Vitamin C which helps maintain tone of blood vessels and promotes good circulation and is essential to the health of the adrenal gland which supports our body in times of stress.

Amino acids which are chains of atoms constructing protein in our body.

Enzymes, which are the life-principle in every live, organic atom and molecule of natural raw food, rejuvenate aged tissues and promote healthy skin.

Germanium which is a mineral that some health authorities claim therapeutic benefits for: immunodeficiency, pain, cardiac disorders, circulatory disturbances and eye problems.

Aloe vera juice is said to be one of the finest body cleansers, cleaning morbid matter from the stomach, liver, kidneys, spleen, bladder, and is considered the finest, known colon cleanser. Studies have shown that it is healing and soothing in the relief of indigestion, stomach distress and ulcers. People claim relief from arthritis, bladder and kidney infections; leg cramps, constipation, hemorrhoids, insomnia, and for vaginitis, it is said to be an excellent vaginal douche. An excellent internal tonic for energy and well being Aloe juice may add greatly to the strength of the food fed, digestive tract, skin, and overall good health and happiness.

It is also used to ease heartburn, ulcers, diverticular disorders, and other types of digestive upset. It is used as an anti-inflammatory and may be taken internally as a remedy for certain digestive complaints. European folk medicine calls for using Aloe vera juice to relieve heartburn and ulcers. Preliminary research has shown promising results. Clinical trials in Japan indicate that certain compounds in Aloe vera reduce the secretion of stomach juices and the formation of lesions.

Animal studies and anecdotal reports claim that drinking Aloe vera juice or taking it as a tablet or capsule can reduce swelling and inflammation in arthritic joints. Drinking Aloe vera juice may also help those asthmatic patients who are not dependent on cortico-steroids.

In 1997, University of San Antonio researcher Jeremiah Herlihy, Ph.D., conducted a study to observe any negative effects of drinking Aloe daily. Rather than exhibiting negative effects, however, test animals receiving daily Aloe showed a remarkable reduction in leukemia, heart disease, and kidney disease. Dr. Herlihy concluded, "We found no indication of harm done to the rats even at high levels." In fact, the Aloe-drinking animals actually lived 25 percent longer than those in the control group (IASC Conference, Texas, 1997).

There is no single ingredient that makes Aloe vera potent and healthful. Researcher Robert Davis, Ph.D., an endocrinologist-biologist, explains that fifteen different

compound groups of nutrients work together to make the plant effective. This means that Aloe vera's effects cannot be synthesized easily in a laboratory. On the upside, this makes the plant useful across a wide spectrum of circumstances. And because the various elements that make Aloe effective are nutrients rather than drugs, Aloe juice may complement medical treatments. In fact some cancer patients state that Aloe vera seems to reduce nausea, increase energy, and may help to minimize low blood counts caused by chemotherapy or radiation.

Aloe vera may help adults, children, and even pets receive more value from daily foods and supplements.