The Many Benefits of Apple Cider Vinegar

By Dr. Ramona Warren

The use of apple cider vinegar (ACV) has been traced to ancient civilizations such as the Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans. The Chinese have used it for centuries in their herbal medicines. Japanese Samurai warriors drank it to increase their strength and power. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, used ACV as a natural antibiotic and antiseptic that fought germs, bacteria, molds and viruses. Today, there so many varied claims concerning the benefits of ACV that it seems almost “miraculous.” Is there any truth to the many supposed benefits of this simple substance?

Apple cider vinegar is made from the liquid of fresh cut apples that have been fermented and turn the liquid into vinegar. There are two types of ACV. The first is natural, unpasteurized, raw ACV that has an amber color and is cloudy due to the “mother,” which is the healthy organisms that develop during the fermentation process and provide the medicinal benefits. The second type of ACV is the pasteurized, refined, distilled vinegar, which is also amber in color but is clear instead of cloudy since it has been filtered. With distilled ACV, the manufacturers have removed the “mother,” most likely because people think if it is cloudy with “things floating inside” it must be bad or spoiled. When using ACV, make sure you choose the best quality ACV and purchase the [unpasteurized, raw and organic apple cider vinegar](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_1?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=apple+cider+vinegar) with the “mother.”

There are hundreds of claims about the benefits of ACV. Here are a few of the more well-known benefits that have research to back them:

1. The acetic acid in ACV is able to kill many types of bacteria and other pathogens. Since it inhibits the growth of E. coli and other bacteria from growing on food, ACV can be used as a food preservative. Hippocrates often used vinegar to clean and disinfect wounds. Because it is an antimicrobial, ACV has also been used to help treat lice, warts, ear infections and nail fungus.
2. Apple cider vinegar reduces insulin resistance and lowers blood sugar, which can be helpful for diabetics, especially Type 2 diabetics or pre-diabetics. One study published in *Diabetes Care*, the journal of the American Diabetes Association, found people with Type 2 Diabetes who took two tablespoons of apple cider vinegar daily had reduced blood glucose levels of four to six percent when tested in the morning.

Additionally, an Arizona State University study found ACV significantly improved insulin sensitivity in people with insulin resistance and possessed physiological effects similar to metformin and acarbose. If you take these medications (or other diabetic medications) and begin using ACV, make sure to monitor your blood sugar and talk with your doctor since your glucose levels may improve and your medication may need to be decreased.

1. Fermented foods, like ACV, have been shown to encourage the growth of healthy gut bacteria and help the body produce enough [hydrochloric acid (HCL) needed for optimal digestion](http://www.onegreenplanet.org/natural-health/tips-to-improve-stomach-acid-levels-needed-for-good-digestion/) and assimilation of nutrients. There is also research suggesting ACV can help with heartburn by correcting low acid, which is often the cause of heartburn. A teaspoon of apple cider vinegar followed by a glass of water should provide quick heartburn relief, however, if you feel a burning sensation in your stomach after taking ACV, it could indicate an ulcer.
2. Studies have shown the use of ACV can help lower cholesterol and triglycerides, and reduce blood pressure. Apple cider vinegar may also help protect LDL cholesterol particles from oxidative stress, thus reducing arterial plaque. Research shows ACV can also help stimulate cardiovascular circulation and detoxify the liver.
3. Apple cider vinegar may help with weight loss. There is evidence suggesting apple cider vinegar consumed before a meal promotes feelings of being full. Experts believe ACV may also stimulate genes that help breakdown fat and help suppress appetite. But keep in mind ACV won’t work miracles on its own. Using ACV is just one aspect of weight loss. It’s the entire lifestyle and diet that counts.
4. Research suggests apple cider vinegar can help with allergies because of its ability to break up mucus. It can also help reduce sinus infections and related symptoms, such as headaches.
5. Apple cider vinegar can help your body get rid of candida. Candida is yeast that is involved with sinus infections, urinary tract infections and thrush. Since ACV helps balance the body’s pH, is rich in enzymes and helps build good bacteria, it is beneficial in reducing candida in the body.

ACV can be used a variety of ways. You can start your mornings by adding 1-2 teaspoons to one cup of water, or make a “tea” by adding 1-2 teaspoons to hot water, with or without a green tea bag. You can add ACV to smoothies or use it in salad dressings. I like to add a tablespoon of ACV in a cup of hot water combined with fresh-squeezed lemon juice and cayenne pepper. (ACV, lemon juice and cayenne are all very cleansing to the body and anti-inflammatory). Just be sure not to overdo it. A little goes a long way.

Apple cider vinegar is a great daily addition that will bring many benefits. Try it yourself and do your own research to discover what works best for you.