

THE SURPRISING BENEFITS OF HONEY

By Noelle Armstrong, CHHC



What are the benefits of honey? Where should I begin? I started to write this article about local honey and why it is beneficial for those with allergies and asthma. Much to my amazement, I discovered that honey is helpful in treating many other ailments as well.

Local honey (made within approximately 50-100 miles of your home) has many benefits to consumers. If you suffer from allergies or asthma, local honey will help to build immunity to seasonal allergies, giving you relief in the spring and winter when allergens are at their highest levels. Local bees visit and collect pollen from local flowers. When you eat honey produced by local bees you are also ingesting a tiny amount of the pollen that causes your allergic reactions. By ingesting small amounts your body starts to build up immunity to the pollen and your symptoms start to diminish.

I know this sounds simple and almost too good to be true. I have had many clients come back a few weeks later, absolutely amazed at how much this has changed their lives. For anyone with allergies, asthma, re-occurring bronchitis or itchy, scratchy throats, local honey could be a simple solution worth trying. And it tastes great! What could be better?

In addition to these benefits, honey can be used as a natural remedy for many other conditions. To help alleviate a cough or cold, eat one tablespoon of honey mixed with one teaspoon of turmeric; your congestion will start to clear and your cough will lessen. An important aspect of this type of natural treatment is that you are eating real food products, not chemical medications, and you can continue taking this mixture until you have relief. There is no overdosing!

Honey is known for its effectiveness in instantly boosting performance and reducing muscle fatigue in athletes. The natural sugars (carbohydrates) play an important role in preventing fatigue during exercise. Honey has also been found to keep blood sugar levels steady compared to other refined sugars.

Honey also offers several ways to give your children a natural energy boost throughout the day. Add honey to their water bottles for a sweet treat: mix honey with a little warm water to dissolve and then add it to cool water. Toast whole wheat bread, spread with honey and natural peanut or almond butter for a healthy sweet snack. If your children are suffering from allergies, asthma, or digestive issues they won't care or even know that you are also treating their symptoms.

Mixing apple cider vinegar with honey may be a remedy for arthritis. Studies have described how this cleansing drink has helped people to find relief from joint pains. The nutrients found in this detox drink (magnesium, calcium, potassium, phosphorous and pectin) are effective at fighting toxins and allowing the body to find its important acid-alkaline balance. Mix two teaspoons of cider vinegar with two teaspoons of honey into a glass of warm water, and drink this three times a day. Dr. D.C. Jarvis, in his book *Arthritis and Folk Medicine* (Galahad Books, 1997), offers support for this prescription for arthritis pain. Dr. Jarvis found that when this mixture is taken daily, calcium is released back into the bloodstream and re-circulated to the bones, therefore allowing arthritis pain relief and preventing osteoporosis.

There are many other easy ways to bring honey into your day as well. Traditionally added to tea, honey can be added to coffee as well for that sweet taste you crave. You can also bake with it. Whenever your recipe calls for 1 cup of sugar, replace it with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of honey; you'll be happily surprised at the wonderful taste, not to mention the health benefits.

Here's to making life a little sweeter in 2009! 

Thank you National Honey Board, www.nhb.org

Chocolate Covered Cherry Honey Smoothie:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen cherries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ banana
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup honey
- 1 cup low fat chocolate soymilk

Combine all ingredients in a blender, process until smooth. No need for ice when using frozen berries. This smoothie is so very healthy and tastes amazing!

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