

HONEY

More Than Just Sweet

by

Jim Phillips

The ancients called honey the, "Nectar of the gods."

For thousands of years it was harvested first from wild bee colonies and then from the few hives of the developing specialized private beekeeper. Honey was so rare and expensive that only the most wealthy elite could afford this golden sweet treat until quite recent times.

The advent of true commercial bee keeping is relatively new and has only become a major industry in parallel with the industrial revolution. Over the past 200 years it has grown into a major industry of its own, now worth billions of dollars.

Almost universally people like, even crave, a sweet treat. Sugar replaced honey as the sweetener to satisfy this craving for sweetness because it was far easier to mass produce and much cheaper than honey.

So why is RAW honey so important to have on hand and why now?

The sweetness of honey comes from a blend of glucose and fructose which not only satisfies the sweet taste buds, but is also quick burning fuel for the body. Honey is also sweeter than sugar, so you use less to satisfy the taste.

However, far more important than the sweetness of honey is its documented nutritional and medicinal properties.

Nutritional Properties of Raw Honey

Raw honey contains up to 80 different substances important for human nutrition: All of the B-complex, A, C, D, E, and K, plus minerals and trace elements: magnesium, sulfur, phosphorus, iron, calcium, chlorine, potassium, iodine, sodium, copper, and manganese.

In addition, the live enzyme content of raw honey is one of the highest of all foods. Honey also contains hormones, and antimicrobial and antibacterial factors.

Properly stored, raw honey will never spoil. One reason for this is that its high sugar content and acidic pH help to inhibit microorganism growth. In fact, raw honey has potent antiseptic, antibiotic, antifungal, and antibacterial qualities that can be used to help with healing.

Wound Healing Properties of Raw Honey

Through the ages raw honey has been applied to wounds to speed healing. This property is well documented in past records and in current credible clinical studies around the world. It has also clearly demonstrated its ability to reduce or eliminate infections in septic wounds.

You might want to gain experience with the healing powers of raw honey now (while you have backup medical help available) on skin rashes, burns and abrasions. Apply a small amount of raw honey gently over the affected area; you may cover it with a clean dressing so you won't stick to everything (some folks have used a dusting of cornstarch to reduce the stickiness, but I don't know if this will have any negative affects).

Twice a day gently rinse with clean warm water, allow the affected area to thoroughly air dry and then reapply raw honey and dressing.

Many years ago, a study by Robert Bloomfield, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, reports "Applied every 2 to 3 days under a dry dressing, honey promotes healing of ulcers and burns better than any other local application. It can also be applied to other surface wounds, including cuts and abrasions..."

Other Healing Uses of Raw Honey

Research has shown that raw honey improves chronic bronchitis, bronchial asthma, sinus problems, and allergies.

Much of the effectiveness of raw honey to help treat respiratory problems has been traced to the bee pollen and propolis suspended within it. A research report from Bulgaria, demonstrated that raw honey has anti-allergic, anti-inflammatory, and expectorant properties that helps insure the body has an immunobiological defense and gives it an improved capacity to repair damaged cells. During this study 17,862 patients ranging in age from 21 to 60 were treated with raw honey; 8,836 were men and 9,026 were women.

The medical conditions of the patients included: Chronic Bronchitis, Asthmatic Bronchitis, Bronchial Asthma, Chronic Rhinitis, Allergic Rhinitis, and Sinusitis. At the conclusion of the study, on the average, 64% were without symptoms, 22% were improved, 7% showed temporary improvements, and 7% had no effect.

Raw honey has also been shown to combat depression, fatigue, insomnia, nervous disorders, urine retention, headaches, and high blood pressure.

I've personally used raw honey to reduce the onset of leg cramps, and once coming on, to speed their elimination. Also raw honey and fresh lemon juice (don't add any water) are very soothing for a sore throat. My mother also uses honey and apple cider vinegar for the same purpose, an old home remedy.

Raw honey has been shown to beautify and soothe the skin and clear up many skin disorders.

It facilitates the digestion and assimilation of other foods, and is effective in countering anemia. Research suggests that raw honey may help with calcium utilization and reduce or eliminate the onset of osteoporosis.

It has also shown laxative, sedative and antitoxic effects.

The only real issue to consider with honey is in relation to those who have sugar metabolism issues like diabetes. In these cases, the internal use of honey must be carefully considered and monitored.

These results come from raw honey and will not all be realized with grocery store honey that has been processed at higher temperatures so it can be finely filtered and clarified. In some cases commercial honey has had water added to it. There are even some honey products that are cut with high fructose corn sweetener.

Storing Honey

Honey is quite corrosive to metals other than stainless steel and should not be allowed to come in contact with any metal in cans or even the metal lids of canning jars.

Store honey in tightly closed stainless steel, plastic or glass containers in a cool dry place. Honey must be tightly sealed from outside air because it will absorb moisture from the air and over time may pick up enough water to spoil.

If putting up honey in glass canning jars, don't heat process it of course, and don't let the honey come in contact with the metal lid (wipe off the lip of the jar and don't tip the jars once sealed).

To liquefy (melt) crystallized raw honey it is important to use low heat in a double boiler and keep the temperature under 110°F. Take your time and heat small quantities at low temperatures so you will not "kill" (pasteurize) the live enzymes and other heat sensitive nutrients in raw honey.

Store raw honey NOW, don't wait

"Colonies are going down. The bees aren't dead in the box or aren't out front," says Jerry Bromenshenk, a bee researcher at the University of Montana. "They've just disappeared. Just vanished." Bees are disappearing at an alarming rate and at this point researchers only have some possible theories, but have not proven why this is happening, nor do they have any means to reverse the trend at this point.

This has serious implications, first bees are the only efficient way for many crops to be pollinated. Without the bees, many crops will simply fail, resulting in food shortages. Secondly, honey supplies will dwindle, reducing availability and driving up prices.

In Short and In Review

- Raw honey is something that you really want to have a lot of in storage because it stores very well and has multiple uses.
- Raw honey as a food tastes great and has many important whole and live nutrients which promote good health in ways that simply do not exist in the likes of cheap "empty calorie" sugar and other refined sweeteners.
- Raw honey has demonstrated many powerful healing properties that can speed healing and possibly save a life during an extended emergency when no other help is available.
- Raw honey is something you can use and experience now to help promote health and healing. Gain experience now so when the time comes you will know what works and what to expect, rather than hoping that you might have an answer during tough times.

Here's to good eats and your good health.

Wishing for you the best now and in the future.

Have a great day,
Jim Phillips

For further reading here are excerpts from two web sites --

<http://www.ebeehoney.com/raw-honey.html>

The wound healing properties of honey may, however, be its most promising medicinal quality. Honey has been used topically as an antiseptic therapeutic agent for the treatment of ulcers, burns and wounds for centuries. One study in India compared the wound healing effects of honey to a conventional treatment (silver sulfadiazene) in 104 first-degree burn patients. After one week of treatment, 91 percent of honey treated burns were infection free compared with only 7 percent receiving the conventional treatment. Finally, a greater percentage of patients' burns were healed more readily in the honey treated group. Another study examined the wound healing benefits of honey applied topically to patients following Caesarean section and hysterectomy. Compared to the group receiving the

standard solution of iodine and alcohol, the honey treated group was infection free in fewer days, healed more cleanly and had a reduced hospital stay.

Several mechanisms have been proposed for the wound healing benefits that are observed when honey is applied topically. Because honey is composed mainly of glucose and fructose, two sugars that strongly attract water, honey absorbs water in the wound, drying it out so that the growth of bacteria and fungi is inhibited (these microorganisms thrive in a moist environment). Secondly, raw honey contains an enzyme called glucose oxidase that, when combined with water, produces hydrogen peroxide, a mild antiseptic. In addition to the specific enzymes found in honey, which may help in the healing process, honey also contains antioxidants and flavonoids that may function as antibacterial agents.

One antioxidant in particular, pinocembrin, which is unique to honey, is currently being studied for its antibacterial properties. One laboratory study of unpasteurized honey samples indicated the majority had antibacterial action against *Staphylococcus aureus*, a common bacteria found readily in our environment that can cause infections, especially in open wounds. Other reports indicate honey is effective at inhibiting *Escherichia coli* and *Candida albicans*. Darker honeys, specifically honey from buckwheat flowers, sage and tupelo, contain a greater amount of antioxidants than other honeys, and raw, unprocessed honey contains the widest variety of health-supportive substances.

The Research:

After nearly 20 years of research, New Zealand biochemist, Peter Molan came to the conclusion that honey cleans and heals wounds better than the medicines used in hospitals. About 50 studies, published in the *British Journal of Surgery* and other journals, attest to honey's ability to maintain a moist healing environment, banish infection, promote new skin growth and prevent scarring. There have been randomized, controlled trials which have proved that honey is more effective than the two most widely used treatments for burns.

How it Works:

Bees add enzymes to nectar to turn it into honey. One of those enzymes produces hydrogen peroxide and gluconic acid, which both help to clean wounds and kill bacteria. Honey releases its hydrogen peroxide slowly, so it is less damaging to skin than the kind you buy at the drugstore. Honey's thickness provides a protective barrier for wounds.

Uses of Raw Honey:

- Honey contains antioxidants, a wide array of vitamins, minerals and amino acids.
- Heals wounds, burns, cataracts, skin ulcers, sores and scrapes.

- Provides a protective barrier for wounds.
- Kills bacteria and germs.
- Reduces inflammation.
- Its amino acids and vitamin C speed the growth of healthy tissue.
- It's a natural source of energy. It enlivens the body, makes muscles stronger, refreshes nerves, cheers up, sharpens the mind, and gives sound sleep.
- Helps reduce chest disorders, coughs, heavy breathing, and insomnia.
- Soothes sore throats.

<http://www.newstarget.com/021506.html>

The list of honey's beneficial functions is a long one. Honey increases calcium absorption; can increase hemoglobin count and treat or prevent anemia caused by nutritional factors; can help arthritic joints, when combined with apple cider vinegar; fights colds and respiratory infections of all kinds; can help to boost gastrointestinal ulcer healing; works as a natural and gentle laxative; aids constipation, allergies and obesity; provides an array of vitamins and minerals; and supplies instant energy without the insulin surge caused by white sugar. Many have found raw honey helpful for its positive effects against allergies and hay fever, and one or two teaspoons last thing at night can help with insomnia. As an antiseptic, honey is also a drawing agent for poisons from bites or stings or infected wounds, and has outperformed antibiotics in treatments for stomach ulcerations, gangrene, surgical wound infections, surgical incisions and the protection of skin grafts, corneas, blood vessels and bones during storage and shipment.

"Raw honey is exceptionally effective internally against bacteria and parasites. Plus, raw honey contains natural antibiotics, which help kill microbes directly. Raw honey, when applied topically, speeds the healing of tissues damaged by infection and/or trauma. It contains vitamins, minerals and enzymes, as well as sugars, all of which aid in the healing of wounds."

So writes Dr. Cass Igram, D.O. in The Survivor's Nutritional Pharmacy. In a fascinating modern development, scientists and doctors are beginning to rediscover the effectiveness of honey as a wound treatment. In recent years, honey has been used effectively in clinical settings for the treatment of fist-sized ulcers extending to the bone, as well as for first, second and third degree burns. Complete healing has been reported without the need for skin grafts and with no infection or muscle loss. It can be applied full strength to such conditions, covered with a sterile bandage, and changed daily. When the wounds are clean, honey acts as a healer. This also is the same procedure for infected wounds, ulcerations and impetigo. Garlic honey can also be applied directly to infected wounds, which will help clean up the area of infection.

Raw honey makes a sterile, painless and effective wound dressing. Apply it directly to open cuts, abrasions and burns, and cover it with a piece of gauze. The results will occur quicker than with conventional alternatives, such as salves and creams.

Honey is also exceptionally effective for respiratory ailments. One Bulgarian study of almost 18,000 patients found that it improved chronic bronchitis, asthmatic bronchitis, chronic and allergic rhinitis and sinusitis. It's an effective treatment for colds, flu, respiratory infections and a generally depressed immune system. Whereas sugar shuts down the immune system, a good quality honey will stimulate it into action.

Here are some more ways to utilize the healing power of honey:

BURNS - Apply freely over burns. It cools, removes pain and aids fast healing without scarring. Apart from being a salve and an antibiotic, bacteria simply cannot survive in honey.

OSTEOPOROSIS - Research has shown that a teaspoon of honey per day aids calcium utilization and prevents osteoporosis - probably not a bad idea for anyone over 50.

ANEMIA - Honey is the best blood enricher by raising corpuscle content. The darker the honey, the more minerals it contains.

FOOD PRESERVATIVE - If you replace the sugar in cake and cookie recipes with honey, they'll stay fresher longer due to honey's natural antibacterial properties. Reduce liquids in the mixture by about one-fifth to allow for the moisture present in honey.

SORE THROATS - Let a teaspoon of honey melt in the back of the mouth and trickle down the throat. Eases inflamed raw tissues.

INSOMNIA - A dessert spoon of honey in a mug of warm milk aids sleep and works wonders.

HYPERACTIVITY - Replace all use of white sugar with honey. White sugar is highly stimulating with no food qualities. Honey provides the energy without the "spike."