

»» APPLE CIDER VINEGAR IS AN ALL-PURPOSE HEALTH TONIC USED TO RID THE BODY OF TOXINS, IMPROVE DIGESTION AND METABOLISM, AND FIGHT BACTERIA AND OTHER GERMS.

the power of SOUR

BY HEATHER HERINGTON, N.D.

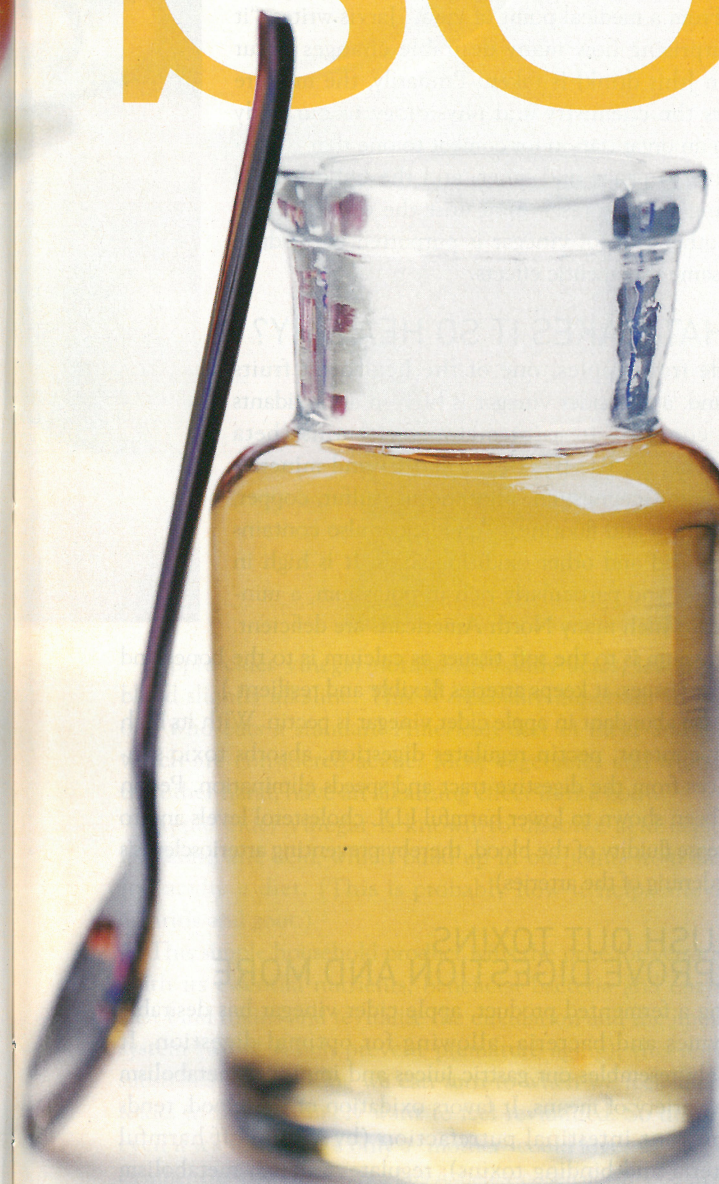
» HANDS UP, THOSE OF YOU WHO WAKE UP EVERY MORNING and run to the kitchen for a swig of apple cider vinegar ... I didn't think so. For most of us, a natural affinity for apple cider vinegar, even diluted, is a stretch. But what about an acquired taste? In fact, if you have the courage to try apple cider vinegar in liquid form, you may find it addictive. Why? Because it works, and it works quickly. (And if you can't get around the sour taste, apple cider vinegar is now available in tablets.) When I'm feeling toxic from eating the wrong foods, or if my metabolism is "off" from stress, there's no other substance in my kitchen that helps me feel better faster than apple cider vinegar.

A FOLK REMEDY WITH A LONG HISTORY OF USE

Found in Egyptian urns as far back as 3,000 B.C., apple cider vinegar was used by the Greeks and Romans for healing and flavoring. In the Middle Ages, it was sold by Paris street vendors as a body deodorant, a healing tonic and a health drink. In Japan, samurai warriors drank it for strength and power. Today, many people use apple cider not only as a health tonic but also as a household cleanser and deodorizing agent.

D.C. Jarvis, M.D., a rural medical doctor from Barre, Vt., was the first to popularize apple cider vinegar. In his book *Folk*

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Medicine (Fawcett Books, 1991), first published in 1959, Jarvis espouses his “miracle tea” made from apple cider and honey. He spent years studying the instincts of wild and domesticated animals, as well as behavioral patterns in children. Jarvis came to the conclusion that “the old drink of Vermont folk medicine made by adding 2 teaspoonfuls of apple cider vinegar and 2 teaspoonfuls of honey to a glass of water satisfies the instinct for acid and sugar that is present in animals and little children.” (If you don’t want the extra calories or have blood sugar irregularities, apple cider vinegar is effective without honey, although it isn’t as tasty.)

HOW DOES IT WORK?

I can’t tell you precisely why apple cider vinegar works. It may be the synergy of all of its ingredients that provides its healthy punch. Unfortunately, there is virtually no scientific research

All About Using and Buying Apple Cider Vinegar

APPLE CIDER VINEGAR CAN BE SIPPED, applied to the skin or inhaled as a steam for a variety of benefits (outlined in the sidebar on p. 57). You can also add apple cider to a warm bath. Standard dosages are as follows:

Capsules: 1 to 2 capsules two to three times a day on an empty stomach or with food. Drink lots of water throughout the day to flush out toxins. (Some apple cider capsules may have added weight-loss ingredients.)
Contraindications: Avoid if you have any stomach or intestinal disorders.

Drink: Use 2 teaspoons to 2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar (and 2 teaspoons to 1 tablespoon raw honey or unsulfured molasses, if desired) added to one 8-oz glass of water. Take in small sips. Drink 1 to 3 cups daily for six weeks. **Contraindications:** Do not use if you have severe stomach or intestinal disorders.

Steam: Mix 2 to 3 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar with 2 to 3 cups of water that have been brought to a slow boil. (Remove from stove and inhale the vapors for at least five minutes, using a towel draped over your head and the pan.)

Cold or warm packs: Soak a towel in 3/4 cup of apple cider vinegar and 1 quart of cold or warm water; apply where needed.

Massage: Use three parts apple cider vinegar to one part almond or olive oil.

What to Look for: Buy apple cider vinegar made from freshly crushed, whole organic apples that have been allowed to ferment naturally in wooden barrels. It should be raw, unfiltered, unpasteurized and have a rich, brownish color. It will have a heavy, pungent odor and taste that puckers your mouth. It never needs refrigeration.

to verify the wide range of medicinal claims attributed to apple cider vinegar. A range of actions can be attributed on the basis of centuries of use, however. And science has found evidence on the action of substances in apple cider vinegar and their effects on the body.

Interestingly, you can see some of the active substances just by looking at a bottle of apple cider vinegar. If held to the light, you might see a tiny formation of cobweb-like substances called the “mother.” Some of this will show at the bottom of the bottle the more it ages.

“From a medical point of view,” Jarvis writes, “it is surprising how many desirable changes occur when [this drink] is taken. Primarily, the mixture shifts the chemistry and physiology in our body from an organization for combat to one that is conducive to peace and quiet, and the building and storing of body reserves against the day of need.” No other type of vinegar is purported to produce the same therapeutic effects.

WHAT MAKES IT SO HEALTHY?

Made from apples, one of the healthiest fruits around, apple cider vinegar is high in antioxidants and contains an assortment of vitamins (beta carotene, A, B1, B2, B6, C and E) and minerals (calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, sulfur, copper, iron, silica and fluorine). Apple cider also contains malic acid and other oxidizing acids. It is high in enzymes and particularly rich in potassium, a mineral in which many North Americans are deficient. (Potassium is to the soft tissues as calcium is to the bones and harder tissues; it keeps arteries flexible and resilient.)

Also abundant in apple cider vinegar is pectin. With its high fiber content, pectin regulates digestion, absorbs toxic substances from the digestive tract and speeds elimination. Pectin has been shown to lower harmful LDL cholesterol levels and to increase fluidity of the blood, thereby preventing arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries).

FLUSH OUT TOXINS, IMPROVE DIGESTION AND MORE

Being a fermented product, apple cider vinegar has desirable enzymes and bacteria, allowing for optimal digestion. It closely resembles our gastric juices and improves metabolism by a variety of means. It favors oxidation of the blood, tends to prevent intestinal putrefaction (by killing off harmful bacteria and binding toxins), regulates calcium metabolism and promotes digestion. The little bits of “mother” that give it a viscous, gelatinous consistency contain beneficial *Acetobacter* bacteria.



Find Relief From Many Common Ailments

HERE IS A LOOK AT SOME OF the conditions you can treat with apple cider vinegar. Unless noted, follow dosage guidelines in the sidebar on p.56, or defer to label instructions on the bottle or package.

- » Allergies
- » Arthritis
- » Bladder infections
- » Brittle bones and nails (Sip apple cider with or after meals. Calcium needs an acid environment for maximum digestibility.)
- » Burns (Make a solution in a ratio of 2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar to 1 cup water and apply to the burned area; massage gently. This will ease the pain and prevent blister formation.)
- » Constipation
- » Coughs, colds, flu and sore throat
- » Dandruff (Apply warm, undiluted apple cider vinegar directly to the scalp and then shampoo.)
- » Detoxification
- » Diarrhea
- » Gas
- » Headaches (Inhale apple cider steam until headache goes away, up to 45 minutes.)
- » Immune deficiency
- » Insect stings (Use cold packs or compresses of apple cider.)
- » Obesity (Sip apple cider vinegar upon rising and, in severe cases, with each meal. It will curb the desire to overeat. One cause of obesity may be insufficient oxidation of the blood, and apple cider vinegar oxidizes. Also be sure to exercise regularly and control food intake.)
- » Weight management
- » Vaginitis (Soak for at least 20 minutes in a warm tub in which 3 cups of apple cider vinegar has been added. Spread your legs to allow water to flow into the vagina. Helps restore normal vaginal acidity and helps get rid of yeast organisms.)

Apple cider vinegar normalizes bodily acids, leaving the blood slightly alkaline. This is especially important in someone who eats a standard American diet of meat and dairy, which are considered acidic. Most vegetables and fruits, on the other hand, have an alkalizing effect in the body.

Apple cider vinegar is known to dissolve acid crystals, including uric acid, which build up in our joints from eating too acidic a diet. (This is probably how it helps alleviate arthritis and gout.)

This simple household product wins the prize for versatility. With its essential nutrients, beneficial bacteria and enzymes that bind toxins and revitalize the circulation and the immune system (all of which prevent premature aging), this natural substance is something we can turn to when we feel sluggish, toxic, in pain or simply want to feel revitalized. So drink up, even if it’s with a taste only a “mother” could love. ■

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selected references Bragg, P and Bragg, PC *Apple Cider Vinegar: Miracle Health System* (Health Science, 1998) ■ Scott, C *Cider Vinegar* [Benedict Lust Publications, 1999] ■ Hills, M *Cider Vinegar: The Natural Healer* (Ulysses Press, 1998) ■ Trum Hunter, B *Fermented Foods and Beverages* (Keats Publishing) ■ Jarvis, DC *Folk Medicine* [Fawcett Crest] ■ Hirschsteiner, T *Home Remedies A to Z* [Barron’s, 2000] ■ Hellmiss, M *Natural Healing with Cider Vinegar* (Sterling Publishing, 1998) ■ Weed, S *Menopausal Years* (Ash Tree Publishing, 1995) ■ Duke, JA *The Green Pharmacy* (Rodale Press, 2000)