Reasons to use honey as a health product

HELPS SUPPRESS A COUGH

The viscous consistency of honey causes it to accumulate a protective coat around the throat area. This coating can help with throat irritation often experienced during a coughing episode. Honey is preferred to over-the-counter cough and cold medications for children older than 12 months of age after asthma, pneumonia, chronic cough have been excluded. At the same time, honeys antimicrobial properties assist the healing process.

_Cooperative Research Centre for Honey Bee Products is furthering the understanding of Western Australia’s floral nectar range of honeys for antimicrobial activity_

TREATS BURNS AND WOUNDS

It surprises many to learn that all honeys can act as a natural antiseptic. Their activity range and type of antimicrobial activity can, however, vary. Medicinal uses for honey are mainly external as once swallowed, the acid in the digestive tract can reduce this antimicrobial effect. This has been confirmed with Manuka honey when the antimicrobial activity is derived from the active ingredient methylglyoxal (MGO).

On the skin and in the mouth, honey is a natural antiseptic against many bacteria, making it a powerful agent against wounds and sores. Its hydrophilic nature draws seeping fluids from the wound.

_Cooperative Research Centre for Honey Bee Products is furthering the understanding of Western Australia’s floral range of honeys for antimicrobial activity. Using the new broth test (which is far more accurate than the existing agar-based test and quantifies antimicrobial activity against a range of bacteria) detailed in-depth knowledge will be provided._
HEALTH PROTECTION

Honey with high levels of antioxidants can provide protection to healthy people. Free radicals and reactive oxygen species have been implicated in contributing to the processes of aging and disease. People protect themselves from these damaging compounds, in part, by absorbing antioxidants from high-antioxidant foods. Although there are a wide variety of natural antioxidant substances, best sources seem to be those from plant origin. The majority of these plants are used by bees to collect honey nectar so the bioactive components can also be found in the honey they produce. It becomes a rich and natural source of bioactive compounds with potential antioxidant activity, similar to some fruits and vegetables. Honey antioxidant activity is often related to its phenolic level, which has been shown to be bioavailable to increase the antioxidant activity of plasma.

Cooperative Research Centre for Honey Bee Products is furthering the understanding of antioxidant activity in Western Australia’s flora honey range. To help the consumer identify the higher activity honeys, the Centre has been working with the Unified Antioxidant Factor Organisation to provide a rating scale, or UAF, to be placed on jars of honey.

PROVIDES ENERGY

Honey can also provide a much-needed energy spike. This all-natural sweetener contains fructose and glucose, which can quickly enter the bloodstream and produce a burst of energy.

STRENGTHENS THE GUT

Honey can be used as a prebiotic, which in turn provides sustenance to the healthy bacteria in our gut. Healthy bacteria are required to properly digest food, absorb nutrients, and equalize the immune system. It is also suggested that honey, because of its prebiotic properties, can deter problematic digestive conditions.

Cooperative Research Centre for Honey Bee Products is furthering our understanding of the daily honey dose required to have a positive prebiotic effect on gut health in different age-groups.

MAY RELIEVE ALLERGIES

Whilst presently there is no medical proof, as honey itself contains traces of pollen, it is hypothesised that it may initiate a pollen allergy immune response with use. Over time, the body may produce enough antibodies to the pollen, which effectively causes the body to release less histamine and consequently, the body will exhibit a more limited immune response. Honey has anti-inflammatory properties that many believe help with the inflammation after an allergic reaction.

Cooperative Research Centre for Honey Bee Products is furthering investigating the anti-inflammatory properties of Australian honey, which is tied to antioxidant activity.