

Health Benefits of Honey: a research summary

©2014 Michael Staddon

There is abundant anecdotal evidence and testimony concerning the health benefits of honey. But what can we really say about honey? What research has been done to provide concrete evidence?

There are many variables at play: varieties of honey from region to region, season to season, and year to year... variables in peoples' ailments, from ailment to another, and from one cause to another, even for the same ailment. As a result, the amount of research needed to sort it out... what it is in the honey that helps, why it helps, how it helps, and what it helps, is astronomical. And very little quality research has been done at all up to this point. The scientific and medical world waits to discover what it is in a substance that does the trick, and the how and why before the FDA will allow any claims to be made.

We should be careful not to mislead anyone in what we say about honey. It behooves the beekeeper to become familiar with what has been discovered about his product.

Proverbs 24:13 "My son, eat thou honey because it is good... so shall the knowledge of wisdom be..."

Proverbs 25:16 "Hast thou found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee..."

Luke 24:42 – Jesus ate honeycomb after the resurrection

Allergies

Dr. T. V. Rajan conducted some studies of debatable quality after his daughter's allergies were helped with honey.

<http://advance.uconn.edu/1999/990405/04059903.htm>

Chris and Alyssa Foster

<http://northernnevadabeekeepersassociation.org/resources/img/ABJ%20Oct%202012%20961-964%20Foster.pdf> research published in the American Bee Journal, October 2012. "Short of making absolute claims, an argument can be made that raw local honey is likely to reduce symptoms of seasonal allergies if the honey contains the same pollen (or cross-reactive pollen) which caused the allergies in question."

A study conducted by students at Xavier University in New Orleans

<http://health.howstuffworks.com/diseases-conditions/allergies/allergy-treatments/local-honey-for-allergies2.htm>

Honey and Calcium

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18361495>

<http://www.preparedfoods.com/articles/honey-may-help-calcium-absorption>

<http://www.ebeehoney.com/HoneyFacts.html>

Proverbs 16:24 "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb: sweet to the soul and health to the bones."

Raw honey is safe for pregnant and breast-feeding mothers, but not fed directly to infants under 1 year

http://www.babycenter.com/404_is-it-safe-for-a-breastfeeding-mom-to-eat-honey_10370335.bc

A discourse on the many amazing health properties of honey, touching also on royal jelly

<https://www.seleneriverpress.com/historical-archives/all-archive-articles/210-honey-in-nutrition>

Wounds and burns

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3188068/>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3263128/>

“...recently in 2004, Professor Peter Molan from New Zealand, based on his work at Honey Research Unit at the University of Waikato said that honey might be useful in treating methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infections.[8] The topical use of honey prevents the dressing from sticking to the healing wound, and may reduce odors, swelling, and scarring when used to treat wounds.[6]

“Honey dressings improve wound healing, make wound sterile in lesser duration, and have better outcomes in terms of incidence of hypertrophic scars and postburn contractures when compared to SSD dressings.”

<http://dermnetnz.org/treatments/honey.html>

Molan, P. C. “A brief review of the use of honey as a clinical dressing” The Australian Journal of Wound Management, 1998

<http://www.klinion.nl/files/files/Brief%20review%20of%20the%20use%20&%20evidence%20for%20honey%20promoting%20wound%20healing.pdf?phpMyAdmin=e45916cab41b966193627d0ad8837577>

Infection is rapidly cleared

Inflammation, swelling, and pain are quickly reduced

Healing occurs rapidly with minimal scarring

The antimicrobial properties of honey prevent microbial growth

Unlike other topical antiseptics, honey causes no tissue damage

It has a direct nutrient effect

It draws lymph out to the cells by osmosis

The osmosis creates a solution of honey in contact with the wound surface which prevents the dressing from sticking, so there is no pain or tissue damage when dressings are changed

There is much anecdotal evidence to support its use

Randomized controlled clinical trials have shown that honey is more effective than silver sulfadiazine and polyurethane film dressing (OpSite) for the treatment of burns.

Cough

<http://therapy.epnet.com/nat/GetContent.asp?siteid=EBSCO&chunkid=155289#ref15>

In two studies, one with 130 children and one with 139 children, honey was found to be more helpful than cough medicine and standard care in reducing nighttime cough and improving sleep.

Sugar Diabetes

International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition, 2009: Effects of natural honey consumption in diabetic patients: an 8-week randomized clinical trial.

Journal of Medical Food, 2004: Natural honey lowers plasma glucose, C-reactive protein, homocysteine, and blood lipids in healthy, diabetic, and hyperlipidemic subjects: comparison with dextrose and sucrose.

Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics, 1990.

Consumption of honey compared to dextrose and sucrose caused:

Less weight gain

Lower triglycerides

Lower cholesterol

Less of a spike in blood sugar