



AWESOME aloe vera!

Aloe vera is the famed first aid gel great for burns, bites and bleeds. This succulent spiky spear also settles digestion, diabetes and infections.

Caroline Robertson discovers the healing benefits of the aloe angel.

An aloe a day keeps disease away according to ancient advocates. Known as the 'Plant of Immortality' in Egypt and the 'Universal Panacea' in Greece; Cleopatra applied aloe for beauty and Alexander the Great used it to heal wounds. In India it's prized for regenerating the female reproductive system earning it the Sanskrit name Kumari or virgin girl. Christopher Columbus exalted aloe, "Four vegetables are indispensable for the wellbeing of man; wheat, grape, olive and aloe. The first nourishes, the second raises his spirit, the third brings him harmony and the fourth cures him."

Today aloe is amongst the most popular herbs for health and beauty with an estimated annual market value of \$13 billion globally. Quality is key with aloe vera as it must be prepared properly to remove excess laxative anthraquinones.

MORNING ALOE!

Drinking aloe vera juice first up in the morning before eating can help improve your digestion and calm your stomach. It will also give your immune system a boost. And when you are healthy inside, it is more likely that you will reflect this on the outside with glowing radiant skin!

The safest form is 100 per cent organic *Aloe vera barbadensis* from the inner leaf, rich in over two hundred nutrients. The whole

leaf form can be more irritating to the gut and skin. Consider an initial allergy test by drinking 5ml liquid or applying a small circle of gel on the skin for 12 hours before proceeding.

Look on the label to check the product is free from nasty additives and that aloe is the main ingredient for optimal potency. As aloe vera juice has a bitter taste, if you can't take it straight blend it with antioxidant berries, energising acai, antioxidant green tea or immune boosting citrus fruits.

Hello aloe!

Aloe is juicy with 99 per cent water and a wealth of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, antioxidant anthraquinones, enzymes, fatty acids, polysaccharides, salicylic acid and saponins. Take advantage of aloe's cleansing and empowering properties through the following applications.

Skin shield

Taken internally, aloe vera juice cleanses and cools the blood, liver, colon and reproductive system. This makes it effective for relieving hot conditions such as rashes,

acne, liver disorders, menopausal flushes and painful periods.

With its reparative betacarotene, vitamin C and E content externally aloe vera is effective for wrinkles, herpes, hemorrhoids, sunspots and fungal infections. According to studies aloe also nurtures faster, less painful healing than medical silver sulfadiazine in burns and soothes sunburn. It's a perfect protective moisturiser for oily skin and an effective aftershave. Aloe's auxin and gibberellins are anti-inflammatory for acne and promote cell renewal in scars, stretch marks or aged skin. Aloe can also assist eczema and psoriasis with one study showing that aloe gel has anti-inflammatory effects superior to one per cent hydrocortisone cream. When applied directly to a wound aloe's anthraquinones have an anesthetic and antibacterial effect. Applied to the nails aloe acts as a bitter nail-biting deterrent.

Digestion

The enzymes contained in aloe vera help break down food and therefore aid digestion. Evidence is still inconclusive as to whether aloe helps IBS. In my twenty years clinical experience small doses of 20ml a day promote softer stools and gently clear intestinal toxins without aggravating bowels. Clinical trials have shown aloe's efficacy in healing ulcers, eliminating helicobacter pylori and reducing acidity.

Colon cleanse

Aloe's bitterness decreases your waist and waste by increasing enzymes and bile, emulsifying and eliminating fats from the body. As aloe absorbs four times faster than water and deeper, toxins in

the colon cling to the jelly and are drawn out through its gentle laxative action. It alkalises the body and increases the absorption of key vitamins including B12.

Aloe army

Aloe vera's anti-viral action is being used against HIV and HSV with notable success. It mobilises our immune macrophages and arms immunity with antioxidants. Aloe vera's antimicrobials include sulphur, lupeol, salicylic acid, cinnamic acid, urea nitrogen and phenol. These natural antiseptics help eliminate bacteria, viruses and fungi.

Aloe against aches

When taken orally, aloe's twelve anti-inflammatory agents can ease swelling and stiffness in conditions like arthritis, bursitis, colitis and fibromyalgia. Some studies also show it can assist asthma-related respiratory inflammation.

Diabetes

Research reveals that aloe vera can help lower blood sugar in type-2 diabetics and reduce visceral fat. Aloe also contains three phyosterols that assist lowering cholesterol.

Kissing clean

Aloe's an effective mouthwash reducing plaque better than chlorhexidine according to a 300 person study. Aloe also blasts bacteria *Streptococcus mutans* and *Candida albicans*. In toothpastes aloe controls cavity-causing oral bacteria. According to the *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* aloe vera gel also combats mouth ulcers, gingivitis, bleeding and periodontitis. ☒

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