



Healthy Skin Straight from the Hive

By Richie Gerber, LNC

Considered the medicine of our ancestors and until the advent of antibiotics in the late 1930's, honey was used to treat a wide array of disorders effectively. Recently, antibiotic resistance is leading a number of doctors back to the miracles of honey. But not all honeys are the same. Depending on the kind of nectar the bees collect, honeys vary considerably in terms of color, taste, antioxidant content, and medicinal quality. Honey is a natural preservative and needs no additives to keep from spoiling. In fact, sealed honey pots found in Egyptian tombs have been found to contain honey that still has its original components. So, why is honey so good for your skin? Here are just a few reasons.

Mild antiseptic

Raw honey contains glucose oxidase, an enzyme that, in the presence of a little water, produces hydrogen peroxide, a mild antiseptic. Glucose oxidase is destroyed by intense heat and pasteurization, so it is absent from most commercial, standard honeys on the store shelf. To make sure you are getting the full benefits of honey in products, select only those with unheated honey so the valuable properties are still viable

Tissue growth

Raw honey also contains bee pollen, enzymes, and propolis, all of which can stimulate new tissue growth. Honey can contain additional medicinal compounds, including essential oils, flavonoids, and polyphenols, depending on the plant from which the pollen is taken.

Exfoliation agent

Honey contains a number of organic acids, which are very mild acids; in skin care they work to dissipate the binding elements that hold dead skin cells together. By loosening these elements, dead skin is exfoliated more readily to make way for new skin cells.

Skin rejuvenation agent

Gluconic acid is naturally present in honey. It is one of the mildest Alpha Hydroxy acids and is proven to minimize fine lines and wrinkles, increase elasticity, stimulate collagen production and balance out oily skin. The gluconic acid also acts as a delivery system, allowing other extracts within a formula to be readily absorbed on the skin.

Smoother skin

Honey is rich in amino acids, the building blocks of living tissue, which are essential for cellular function. In the skin, they work to retain moisture. The topical application of amino acids helps the skin to maintain moisture; it has also shown evidence of collagen and elastin stimulation, thus, balancing the effects of sebum on the skin as well as the ability to provide a smoother texture to the skin.

"Anti" properties

Honey is chock full of various bioflavonoids, the water-soluble plant pigments that have anti-inflammatory, anti-histaminic, and anti-viral properties. These properties work in combination to calm pores, prevent blemishes, and reduce puffiness.

Moisturizer

Honey is nature's greatest humectant, which is a substance that promotes the retention of water and is a water-binding



agent. The high sugar content of honey makes it a good humectant that is capable of retaining moisture. Honey is also hygroscopic; meaning it readily absorbs moisture from the atmosphere and is not prone to drying out.

Free Radical Scavenger

Due to its high antioxidant content, often, honey is referred to as a free-radical scavenger, helping to reverse the damage free radicals cause upon the skin. The acid mantle, a coating that protects against bacteria and maintains its moisture content, protects your skin. Harsh soaps are very alkaline and can strip the acid mantle from the skin. This is not something that you want to do. Body care products should be slightly acidic as is honey, which helps to maintain the skin's acid mantle.

The skin is your largest organ. Make sure it gets the nutrition it needs by using products with raw, unfiltered organic honeys in their formulas. You won't "bee-lieve" the difference. Find out more about skin care products utilizing medicinal honeys at www.healthfromthehive.com.

Richie Gerber, co-founder of the Bread of Life Natural Foods Market and Restaurant in South Florida, has been involved with Health and Wellness for over 30 years. In 1997, the Bread of Life merged with Whole Foods Markets. A licensed nutritionist, Richie hosted the radio show, Natural Grocer. He has been a pioneer in South Florida talk-radio for ten years. Currently, he is the CEO and founder of BeeCeuticals Organics, a natural and organic line of skin care that utilizes a unique blend of raw, unfiltered, certified organic honeys: The Organics Holistic Honey Blend™.