

aloe + health

welcome to the healing side

Aloe vera is best known as a soothing remedy for minor burns, rashes and wounds—but when it comes to burns, it does more than just ease pain and inflammation. Extensive research since the 1930s has demonstrated aloe's ability to speed up healing. (See, moms do know best.) For instance, a study in the 1990s of people with moderately severe burns found that those who used aloe gel healed in about 12 days, while those who used a regular gauze dressing took 18 days to heal.

Aloe vera gel is also an effective treatment for psoriasis symptoms, insect bites and allergies, and it even helps lessen the painful effects of shingles. A micro-coating of aloe is now also found inside the latex gloves used by doctors, police and lab technicians to protect their hands from latex irritation. Applying the soothing gel to skin is worry-free except for a few unlucky people who, ironically, develop a mild allergic reaction (usually a rash or itching).

Aloe also comes in another form: juice. As a rule, the gel is used externally; the juice is taken internally. Aloe juice has laxative properties and acts as an anti-inflammatory; it can be used as a remedy for intestinal problems such as indigestion and irritable bowel syndrome. There may be bigger roles for aloe vera down the road too. Researchers are currently exploring the potential of aloe extracts to boost the immune system, combat HIV and treat certain types of cancer, particularly leukemia.

But for now, when buying aloe vera products for healing purposes, keep in mind that those containing "aloe vera extract" or "reconstituted aloe vera" may be much less potent than pure aloe (98 percent or more aloe vera). Aloe should be the first ingredient listed on the label.

—Maureen Meyers Farrar



Aloe you can drink:
Lily of the Desert's organic,
preservative-free aloe juice.



Feeling a little queasy?
Stir some of Naturade's aloe-based
Stomach Formula into water or tea.



Jason's pure aloe vera gel takes
the heat out of sun or stove burns;
the cream eases itching, chapping.

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