

Apple Cider Vinegar

EXPLORING
THE TART
& TASTY
TREND

By Becca Newell

An apple a day keeps the doctor away—or so the old adage goes. And according to some ancient folk remedies, the same can be said for apple cider vinegar.

This centuries-old health tonic has been used anecdotally to treat a myriad of skin and health problems, including fungal infections, acne, dandruff, warts, heartburn, and blood pressure. Stories dating back to ancient Greece tell of Hippocrates prescribing an ACV-honey mix to treat colds and other maladies. Still, the potency of this seemingly miracle potion, made from crushed, fermented apples, is yet to be determined, scientifically speaking. Though online acclaim—and a few preliminary studies—beg to differ.

Most recently, detox diets have praised the daily consumption of ACV as a means to cleanse the body of toxins while suppressing hunger. While research results remain inconclusive, some studies suggest ACV lowers blood sugar levels when consumed with a meal, causing participants to feel full upon eating and consume fewer calories later on. One preliminary study with rats also indicated some truth to the “natural weight loss supplement” claims. The 30-day trial subjected two groups of rats to a high-fat diet, with one set also receiving a daily dose of ACV. From the results, researchers concluded that “metabolic disorders caused by [a] high fat diet are thwarted by taking apple cider vinegar.” Similarly, these results also suggested ACV may help to satisfy bouts of hunger and aid in the prevention of fatty plaque buildup in arteries.

Additionally, a Japanese study of obese individuals found the daily consumption of acetic acid, found in ACV, reduced body weight and body fat in participants. The results provided further evidence that ACV may increase metabolism. Regardless of the increasingly positive data, dietitians encourage exercise, healthy eating, and portion control to maintain weight; ACV alone is not the answer.

There is little data proving ACV's detoxifying capabilities, but one study in mice suggested ACV increases antioxidant levels and thusly, liver and kidney protection against oxidative injuries (damage from free radicals).

While consumption of ACV in small doses hasn't prompted many health concerns, there is some caution against the long-term use of non-diluted vinegar and tooth enamel wear. For those interested in a daily swig of the sour stuff, it's recommended to do so with a weakened solution—one tablespoon of ACV mixed in at least eight ounces of water—to protect against enamel and tooth erosion.

Perhaps with a few more positive studies to consider, we'll soon be reaching for a bottle of the apple-based elixir, instead of the fruit bowl.



FILTERED VS UNFILTERED

In filtered ACV, the “**mother of vinegar**” (a cluster of organic compounds and probiotics that's created during the fermentation process) and other sediment is removed, resulting in a non-cloudy liquid that is typically pasteurized. It is believed that the refining process strips away any health benefits. While both the organic—or unfiltered—and filtered options work equally well in the kitchen, only the unfiltered version is thought to possess health-enhancing properties.

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