

*Weight Loss and  
Good Health with*

# **APPLE CIDER VINEGAR**

Cynthia Holzapfel



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ican colonies was some of the best in the world, early Americans continued the practice of using alcoholic hard cider as a primary beverage. By the late 1800s, cider's importance began to wane, influenced by a growing American temperance movement among settlers of English descent and by German and Irish immigrants who preferred beer. However, apple cider vinegar had been firmly established as a staple in the medicine chests of folk practitioners and on the tables of American homemakers.

### **Apple Cider Vinegar in Natural Health Care**

In the early '50s a Vermont country doctor by the name of D. C. Jarvis published a small book on his observations of the use of apple cider vinegar by his rural patients to successfully treat a number of common ailments. *Folk Medicine* was written as a way to organize these findings in a form he could leave to his daughter and grandchildren, but it evolved into one of the most popular treatises on the use of apple cider vinegar to promote health.

On many occasions Dr. Jarvis involved his patients in simple experiments to test whether taking apple cider vinegar would positively affect health. By analyzing urine samples, he was able to detect patterns of changing acidity and alkalinity in the body as a response to illness. He observed that the urine of patients who drank apple cider vinegar to combat the onset of acute illness (colds, flu, etc.) would return quickly to its normal acidity. Dr. Jarvis also made observations about regular use of apple cider vinegar to combat chronic conditions, such as high blood pressure, arthritis, and overweight. To prove that the success of these treatments was not the result of a placebo effect influenced by the faith of his patients, Dr. Jarvis also tested the use of apple cider vinegar on ailing farm animals and got similar positive results.

Paul C. Bragg, a pioneer of the mid-twentieth century health food movement, was a modern-day American promoter of a raw foods diet (as well as the use of fresh juices, untreated water, and vigorous exercise) for

improving and maintaining health. He was also a strong advocate of the use of apple cider vinegar, especially with honey, as a healing beverage. Bragg's family made their own apple cider vinegar from the apples they grew and used it as a staple in their diet. His father drank a combination of cider vinegar and honey to relieve the fatigue of long hours working on a farm. While recovering from tuberculosis as a teenager, Bragg rediscovered this healthful elixir and credited his renewed vigor and strength to it. He went on to publish a number of books on apple cider vinegar, fasting, raw foods, and other subjects relating to health, diet, and fitness with his daughter-in-law Patricia Bragg. Like Dr. Jarvis, Bragg believed the potassium and enzymes in apple cider vinegar (especially those found in organic, unfiltered cider vinegar) were the reasons for its effectiveness in promoting good health.

### **Apple Cider Vinegar for Today's Lifestyles**

With the renewed interest in finding health solutions in our everyday diet, apple cider vinegar is back in the spotlight, along with soy, oats, blueberries, sea vegetables, and flaxseeds, as one of a number of nutritious "power foods." This interest is part of a medically supported trend away from the overconsumption of commercially processed packaged products in favor of eating more natural, whole foods.

Apple cider vinegar fits in well with the move many people are making toward more healthful, simple lifestyles. It's readily available, inexpensive, and extremely versatile. A dash of apple cider vinegar can be enough to liven up a plate of steamed vegetables, spike a salad, or give just the right amount of flavor to a sauce or dip. A simple tonic of vinegar, water, and honey can help maintain optimum body functioning or reduce weight. And, of course, there are many uses for apple cider vinegar as a handy tool in your medicine chest.

In order to understand why apple cider vinegar is so effective, we'll explore the ways you can use it to lose weight and maintain good health.

it's important to have a source of health-promoting fats. You might consider eating more of your fats in whatever meal precedes the time of day you're most likely to feel the urge to snack. If you can't get through the afternoon without a candy bar, try adding some walnuts to your lunch. If the refrigerator is your last stop before going to bed, have a large fresh salad with flax oil or olive oil for dinner.

Although being overweight is primarily a condition of too much fat in the body, water retention can contribute to the bloating that makes your clothes tighter and leaves you feeling groggy and tired. Diets high in salt are a prime contributor to water retention, but a lack of potassium can also make a difference. Potassium acts as the polar opposite of sodium; where sodium helps hold water in your body, potassium helps cells eliminate it. If you add more high-potassium foods to your diet, you'll be providing a better balance to the sodium in your foods. (This is not a license to go wild with the salt shaker. Don't make it a habit to reach for the salt before picking up your fork at meals.)

### **Apple Cider Vinegar for Weight Loss**

Dr. Jarvis was one of the first people to document the folk remedy of using apple cider vinegar for weight loss. It was generally accepted by Dr. Jarvis's Vermont patients that by taking apple cider vinegar on a regular basis, one would experience gradual, certain weight loss. The dose they used was two teaspoons in a glass of water before meals.

Although many fad diets that create rapid weight loss have come and gone over the years, it's encouraging to note that the apple cider vinegar diet leads to gradual weight loss. It would be nice if you could shed pounds quickly and never see them again, but experience has shown that weight that leaves easily comes back easily. If you lose weight quickly, your body will oblige you by kicking in mechanisms to make it more likely this weight will slip back on in no time. But if you can be patient and don't expect instant results, your fat cells will adjust to their new size more willingly and not insist on contributing to your waistline.

When you give it some thought, it makes good sense that drinking apple cider vinegar before meals would help with weight loss. We saw earlier that apples are a good source of pectin, and including pectin in your diet can make you feel fuller and more satisfied. Since apple cider vinegar contains the same amount of pectin as apples (one apple has about 1.5 grams), it can suppress your appetite in a similar way.

There's also good science behind why apple cider vinegar would encourage weight loss even more effectively than eating raw apples. In general, acids help with the digestion of protein, the building blocks for some of our hormones, especially growth hormone. We've seen how this hormone is instrumental in breaking down fat cells. By increasing the acid present in your stomach before a meal, you'll ensure the chances for thorough digestion and increase the availability of protein for hormone synthesis.

Protein is needed for the production of insulin, which is necessary for converting glucose to energy and maintaining an active, fat-burning metabolism. Here again, apple cider vinegar can raise your metabolic rate by increasing your body's ability to utilize proteins for insulin formation.

The amino acid tryptophan plays a critical role in ensuring good levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin in the body. Serotonin is a natural mood elevator and tranquilizer. Low levels of serotonin have been linked to mental illness, especially depression, and very low levels of serotonin can sometimes lead to suicidal tendencies. As with the production of insulin, apple cider vinegar releases proteins during digestion that the body uses to build tryptophan. In this way, it begins a chain reaction that leads to a feeling of serenity and satisfaction. Because overweight can be a result of stress-induced eating, maintaining a feeling of well being can be an important factor in staying slim and healthy.

Greater protein utilization helps the formation of growth hormone, the substance that keeps your body's metabolism going while you're at rest. This is why it's important to drink apple cider vinegar before or with your evening meal. If you make sure this meal is high in protein, it'll increase the amount of protein available for the apple cider vinegar to convert into

amino acids. This increased protein breakdown makes it more likely that growth hormone will be produced and your metabolism will be stimulated while you sleep. (If you find a high-protein evening meal overstimulates you, consider eating it a little earlier in the evening than usual.)

Because apple cider vinegar stimulates digestion, it also reduces the amount of time that fats remain in your digestive tract. It's important that your body gets a chance to remove key nutrients from your food, and conditions that contribute to diarrhea can be life threatening. But at the same time, it can be unhealthful to have food remain in the intestines for too long. If fats are present longer than necessary during digestion, more fats will be absorbed.

Apple cider vinegar can improve the body's utilization of iron, a nutrient that acts like fire starter for fuel. Iron is a key component in substances that carry oxygen to the cells and hold it there. Acids (like the acetic acid found in apple cider vinegar) help release iron in the food you eat and make it more available to be a building block for oxygen-carrying hemoglobin and oxygen-attracting myoglobin. Oxygen is as essential for burning energy in the body as it is for a fire to burn in a fireplace. It's the ability of apple cider vinegar to increase iron utilization and energy consumption in the body that makes it such a supportive food for weight loss. The formula for this process looks something like this:

iron absorption > oxygen utilization > energy consumption > weight loss

Apple cider vinegar works at the very beginning of the digestive process to stimulate your appetite and increase your interest in food. Normally, you wouldn't think of this as being the direction you want to go in if you're trying to lose weight. But apple cider vinegar works positively to support your efforts by increasing your interest in whole foods. Vinegar is well known as a stimulator for the taste buds. It's the secret ingredient in ketchup, salad dressings, and other condiments that keeps you coming back for more. If your taste buds are working well, it's easier to appreciate the wonderful, complex

*coughs*—One of the oldest and most familiar home remedies for a cough is a combination of honey and lemon juice. You can substitute apple cider vinegar for the lemon juice, combining twice as much honey as vinegar. Take anywhere from one teaspoon to one tablespoon of this mixture at a time, five to six times a day, especially right before bed when nighttime coughing can disrupt your sleep. This remedy is especially good for children, who can sometimes get an upset stomach from over-the-counter cough syrups.

Another folk remedy for coughing spells at night involves sprinkling apple cider vinegar on your pillowcase or a cloth placed on the pillow.

*cramps*—(see also leg cramps) Muscle cramps can be caused by a deficiency of vitamin E in the diet or an imbalance of calcium and magnesium in the body. Taking apple cider vinegar regularly as a tonic will supply helpful minerals and vitamin E.

*cuts and abrasions*—Apple cider vinegar has been used to heal wounds for centuries. Applying it full strength will not only reduce the chance of infection but will also increase the speed of healing.

*dandruff*—Using apple cider vinegar full strength on your scalp will help destroy the bacteria and/or fungus that causes dandruff. Apply to the scalp, rub in, and leave on for a half hour to an hour before washing your hair.

*depression*—Depression can range from an occasional mood problem to a serious metabolic disorder. Although the severity and causes vary widely with each individual, some Eastern medicine practices subscribe to the belief that depression is caused by a stagnant liver. A daily dose of apple cider vinegar tonic works as a liver-cleanser, helped by the amino acids it contains. Since the level of serotonin in the brain can effect mood, apple cider vinegar can help there as well. (See page 18.)



# Apple Cider Vinegar— An Asset for Health

**Apple cider vinegar** has been used throughout history as a functional food to reduce infections, improve digestion, and maintain a healthy weight.

In *Weight Loss and Good Health with Apple Cider Vinegar*, you'll learn why apple cider vinegar is such a nutritional powerhouse, which substances in it promote good health, ways for utilizing it to take weight off and keep it off, and how to use it to achieve radiant skin and shining, beautiful hair.

The **Live Healthy Now** series supplies all the tools you need to restore, maintain, and improve your health.

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