

9063 - Apple Cider Vinegar



What is Apple Cider Vinegar?

Apple cider vinegar is produced when apple juice is fermented first to alcohol (making wine) and then to acetic acid (making vinegar). Fermentation is a process in which sugars in a food are broken down by bacteria and yeast. In the first stage of fermentation, the sugars are turned into alcohol. Then, if the alcohol ferments further, you get vinegar.

In recent years, apple cider vinegar has been singled out as an especially helpful health boost. It is now sold in both the condiment and the health supplement aisles of your grocery store. While many of the folk medicine uses of vinegar are unproven (or were disproved), a few do have a medical research backing them up.

Scientific Evidence of Apple Cider Vinegar Benefits

There are some medical uses of vinegar that are promising according to a small handful of studies. Many of these preliminary studies were done on animals or on cells in a lab. The human studies have been small. At this point, there is little scientific evidence to support its medicinal qualities, and further studies are needed to support claims of the therapeutic benefits. **Until there is conclusive evidence about the health benefits of ACV, it is better to stick with proven treatment methods for your medical conditions.**

- **Diabetes:** The effect of vinegar on blood sugar levels is perhaps the best researched and the most promising. Several studies have found that taking vinegar before a meal may help lower glucose levels by delaying gastric emptying. For instance, one 2007 study of 11 people with type 2 diabetes found that taking two tablespoons of apple cider vinegar before bed lowered glucose levels in the morning by 4-6%.
- **High cholesterol:** Results from a 2006 study conducted using rat models showed that vinegar may potentially lower cholesterol levels. This reduction is thought to be attributed to the way *pectin* (soluble fibre), found in ACV, binds cholesterol and removes it from the body as it passes through the digestion system. It is yet to be proven that these reductions are also seen in humans.
- **Weight loss:** For thousands of years, vinegar has been used for weight loss. White vinegar (and perhaps other types) might help people feel full. A 2005 study of 12 people found that those who ate a piece of bread along with small amounts of white vinegar felt fuller and more satisfied than those who just ate bread alone.

What Are the Risks of Apple Cider Vinegar?

On the whole, the risks of taking occasional, small amounts of apple cider vinegar seem low. But using apple cider vinegar over the long term, or in larger amounts, could have risks.

- **Apple cider vinegar is highly acidic.** The main ingredient of apple cider vinegar is acetic acid. As the name suggests, it's quite harsh. Apple cider vinegar should always be diluted with water or juice before swallowed. Pure apple cider vinegar could damage the tooth enamel and the tissues in your throat and mouth. Vinegar has been known to cause contact burns to the skin and may burn the esophagus if not properly diluted.
- **Long-term use of apple cider vinegar could cause low potassium levels and lower bone density.** If you already have low potassium or osteoporosis, talk to your doctor before using apple cider vinegar.



Should I Use Apple Cider Vinegar?

The answer depends on how you want to use apple cider vinegar. As a salad dressing, you should be fine. But taken as a daily medical treatment, it could be a little more risky. Although some studies of apple cider vinegar are intriguing, a lot more research needs to be done. Right now, there is not enough evidence that apple cider vinegar or any vinegar has any health benefit for any condition. Since the benefits are unknown, so are the risks. If you're thinking about trying apple cider vinegar, talk to your doctor first. It's always worth getting an expert's advice.

Resources: <http://www.webmd.com/>, <http://en.canoe.ca/>