

## HONEY - THERAPEUTIC USES

Sajal Saha

**Dr Manasa Grandhi, Dr N Raja Kumar, Dr V Gouri, Dr D Uma  
Maheshwar Rao and Dr N Sathibabu**

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Acharya N G Ranga Agricultural University

Kondempudi, Vishakapatnam District -531026

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### **Abstract**

*Honey is a sweet, viscous food substance made by honey bees and some related insects by secreting the nectar from the flowers. Bees store honey in wax structures called honeycombs. Honey's colour, taste, aroma and texture vary greatly depending on the type of flower a bee frequents. Honey is primarily composed of sugars. Those being, with average percentages of the total honey composition shown for comparison: Fructose (38.2%), Glucose (31.3%), Maltose (7.1%), and Sucrose (1.3%). The Vitamin and mineral content of honey is due to it containing pollen. This is why consuming raw unfiltered and unpasteurized honey is so important if honey's health benefits are to be obtained. Honey is a valuable product of nature that can be solely used or in combination in the treatment of various diseases. All of the vitamins, antioxidants, and enzymes can be destroyed by heating the honey. Honey has antifungal anti-tumor properties and anti-bacterial properties that draw out impurities from the skin, thus targeting breakouts, reducing redness and calming inflammation, acts as a good antioxidant, it plays a major role in the prevention of cancer as well as heart disease, useful in healing ulcers, worms infestations, bronchial asthma, cough, nausea and vomiting, normalize kidney functioning, purifying the blood, maintain the right balance of haemoglobin and red blood corpuscles, reduce fat and to clean the bowels. Honey should not be given to the children under the age of 18 months because it contains naturally occurring bacterial botulinum, which bees collect together with the nectar*

**Key words:** Honey, Honey Bees, Natural, Therapeutic, nutritive food

## Introduction

Honey is a sweetened food substance made from the sugary secretions of plants (floral nectar) or secretions of other insects (such as honeydew), by regurgitation, enzymatic activity, and water evaporation. Bees store honey in wax structures called honeycombs. Honey's colour, taste, aroma and texture vary greatly depending on the type of flower a bee frequents. The variety of honey produced by honey bees (the genus *Apis*) is the best-known, due to its worldwide commercial production and human consumption. Honey is collected from wild bee colonies, or hives of domesticated bees, a practice known as *beekeeping or apiculture*.



Honey is primarily composed of sugars. Those being with the average percentage of the total honey composition shown for comparison: Fructose (38.2%), Glucose (31.3%), Maltose (7.1%), and Sucrose (1.3%). Approximately, 17.2% of honey's composition is water. If the honey contains too much water it will ferment. If it contains too little it will begin crystallizing. There are also other sugars occupying approximately 1.5%. Ash makes up 0.2 per cent of honey and 3.2 per cent is other solids.

The acids of honey account for less than 0.5 per cent of the reported solids, but this level contributes not only to the flavour but, is in part responsible for the excellent stability of honey against microorganisms. Several acids have been found in honey, gluconic acid is the most common one.

Another component of solids is amino acids. Amino acids are the building blocks of protein, and in honey, they come from the pollen that is left in the honey by the honeybees. It has been found that honey, depending on its source, can contain all of the essential twenty amino acids in its pollen or protein components. On average honey contains 11 to 21 common amino acids. They are the “building blocks” of proteins and several of them are essential to life and must be obtained in the diet. Because honey contains pollen, it can be useful in treating allergies.



The minerals contained in honey are Potassium, Chlorine, Sulphur, Calcium, Sodium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Silica, Iron, Manganese, and Copper. Honey also contains important enzymes Invertase, Diastase (Amylase), and Glucose Oxidase. Vitamins found in honey include B6, thiamine, riboflavin, pantothenic acid and niacin. In addition, the antioxidants chrysin, pinobanksin, vitamin C, catalase, and pinocembrin help neutralize damaging free radical activity. *All of the vitamins, antioxidants, and enzymes can be destroyed by heating the honey.*

It is very important to note that most of the vitamin and mineral content of honey is due to it containing pollen. This is why consuming raw unfiltered and unpasteurized honey is so important if honey's health benefits are to be obtained. One tablespoon of honey contains 64 calories, yet it has a healthy glycemic load of around 10 for 1 Tbsp, which is a little less than a banana. Because of this, it does not cause a sugar spike and elevated insulin release like regular table sugar.

The USDA has reported on the nutritional content of honey, but not all honey is created or treated equally. Consuming raw honey will be better than eating commercially processed honey. With all the nutritive properties since the olden days, honey is been medically used in treating health disorders therapeutically.

Honey is a valuable product of nature that can be solely used or in combination in the treatment of various diseases.

### **Therapeutic uses of Honey**

- Constant use of Honey strengthens the white blood corpuscles to fight bacterial and viral diseases.
- Natural honey when taken before bed is believed to fuel the liver, speed up fat-burning metabolism, ease stress hormones and help Insomnia.
- Honey has antifungal and antibacterial properties that draw out impurities from the skin, thus targeting breakouts, reducing redness and calming the inflammation.

- The anti-inflammatory activity of Honey reduces edema, minimizes scarring and protects wounds from additional infection.
- Initiate growth of healthy granulation tissue.
- Honey acts as a good antioxidant, it plays a major role in the prevention of cancer as well as heart disease.
- Possess anti-tumor properties.
- It is very useful in healing ulcers, worm infestations, bronchial asthma, cough, nausea and vomiting.
- Honey is said to normalize kidney functioning, useful in treating urinary tract disorders.
- Acts as a sedative and is very useful in bed wetting disorders.
- Keeps the gums in a healthy state, increasing their vascularity.
- It improves appetite.
- It helps recovery from alcohol intoxication and protects the liver.
- It aids in purifying the blood, maintain the right balance of haemoglobin and red blood corpuscles.
- Counteracts and stop itching from the insect bites and poisonous plants.
- It helps to reduce fat and to clean the bowels.
- Produce a natural laxative effect and can help in relieving constipation dysentery and diarrhoea.
- It strengthens heart muscles and improves their functions.
- Honey gives relief to the patients suffering from asthma and tuberculosis.
- It strengthens and powers the intestines by avoiding the accumulation of toxic elements.
- It acts as an immune booster, increases the vitality of the body.
- Perfect antidote against the tiring stress and strains.



#### **Precautions to be taken while using honey**

- Honey should not be heated or consumed warm as it causes a toxic effect.

- Honey should not be consumed when you are working in a hot environment.
- It should not be mixed with hot, spicy foods, alcoholic beverages, ghee and mustard oil as it enhances the poisonous properties when mixed with honey and causes an imbalance.
- It should not be consumed in excess quantities, if consumed it produces a condition called MADHVAJIRNA (Indigestion of Honey).
- Honey should not be given to the children under the age of 18 months because it contains naturally occurring bacterial botulinum, which bees collect together with the nectar.
- As a thumb rule, in the case of a normal diet, not more than 10 teaspoons of honey (about 50ml) per day is recommended. During full fasting, about 150 ml to 200ml honey can be recommended mixing with water or tea.

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