

the hive

Known as one of nature's greatest all-natural healers, honey has been used as a home remedy for thousands of years. Even today, there are plenty of ways to [take advantage of honey's superpowers](#), from soothing a cough to embracing the natural sweetener's antioxidant properties.

But if you still have questions about honey's health benefits buzzing around your brain, read on! We're covering:

- The nutritional value and benefits of eating honey
- The conditions, concerns, and health issues honey can address
- The different types of honey, like raw, pure, and processed

“Regular” Honey vs. Raw Honey

All kinds of honey aren't created equal. You should be mindful of the differences before downing a spoonful.

Processed Honey

When you think of “regular” honey, you might picture the syrupy liquid in a bear-shaped bottle that's commonly found at the grocery store. This is usually pasteurized and filtered honey, so it's considered processed honey.

Filtering helps achieve a smoother and longer-lasting consistency. This removes any honeybee residue, beeswax, solids, and pollen that can cause the viscous liquid to crystallize more quickly.

Pasteurization involves treating honey at high heat levels. This helps extend honey's shelf life and further prevents crystallization. However, this processing can eliminate some of the beneficial nutrients and living enzymes inherently found in this lovely golden liquid.

Pure Honey and Natural Honey

Pure honey and natural honey are also typically pasteurized and filtered. Honey is considered “natural” when it doesn't include any artificial additives. But natural honey may include corn syrup, sugar, or natural flavoring. It's considered “pure” when it doesn't contain any added ingredients whatsoever.

If you're thinking, “Honey with *corn syrup*? The horror!” — well, you're not far off. Honey authenticity (or the lack thereof) is actually a persistent concern.

According to a 2017 study in the Journal of the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists (AOAC), “Honey is a precious natural product that is marketed with a wide range of nutritional and medicinal properties. However, it is also a product subjected to frequent adulteration through [mislabeling and mixing](#) with cheaper and lower-quality honeys and various sugar syrups.”

So, honey that is labeled “pure” is a better choice than “natural” honey or any highly processed varieties containing artificial ingredients. (That's why we use pure, organic honey to keep our Perfect Snacks [fresh and sweet!](#))

Raw Honey

If you really want to embrace all the health benefits of honey, stick with the raw kind. It's the closest thing you'll get to the hive itself! Since raw honey is left unpasteurized and unfiltered, it delivers the most complete package of nutrients.

If you're eager to incorporate raw honey into your diet, make sure you purchase it from a reputable vendor to ensure the highest possible quality without contaminants.

Just refrain from serving raw honey to children less than a year old. Some of the microorganisms in raw honey can be harmful and even life-threatening to babies' vulnerable systems, causing a condition known as infant botulism.

However, most older children and adults can safely enjoy the benefits of eating raw honey. If you're unsure if raw honey is right for you and your family, check to your doctor first.

How Botanical Origins Impact Honey's Health Benefits

You'll notice that different types of honey (at all levels of processing) are named after different plants. There's clover honey, wildflower honey, buckwheat honey ... and the list continues. These names identify which flowers the honeybees extracted the nectar from in the honey-making process.

Different plants actually do impact honey's nutritional benefits. For instance, manuka honey is a more powerful remedy than other varieties. Keep this in mind as you hunt around for honey.

8 Honey Health Benefits

1. Fights Free Radical Damage

Raw honey is packed with [powerful antioxidants](#), which fight against cell damage.

When harmful agents known as free radicals try to attack your cells through a process called oxidative stress, antioxidants forfeit an electron to keep your cells safe. Free radical damage is associated with aging, inflammatory disorders, and diseases, including cancer.

Luckily, honey can help combat these consequences — and there's science to back it up. One study found that a dollop of [buckwheat honey](#) increased in vitro antioxidant activity in healthy adults.

2. Combats Harmful Bacteria

Honey is famous for its antibacterial properties and its ability to [combat many types of bacteria](#), including salmonella and E. coli. Across folk medicine traditions, it's been used as a treatment for a variety of bacterial and fungal infections.

During pollen synthesis, bees deposit hydrogen peroxide, a natural antiseptic, into the honey they're creating. Factor in honey's low water content and slight acidity, and the harmful microbes don't stand a chance!

3. Calms a Sore Throat and Cough

The idea that honey can soothe a cough isn't just an old wives' tale; it's actually one of the top benefits of eating honey. Researchers have shown that a 2.5-ml dose of honey can be a [more effective cough suppressant](#) for children with upper respiratory infections than some common cough medicines, including Benadryl.

Honey is successful at suppressing coughs thanks to its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory powers. And, because of honey's viscous consistency, it coats the throat providing a soothing effect.

5. Promotes Oral Health

Surprisingly, honey can fend off gingivitis and periodontal disease. In one study, manuka honey chews resulted in [greater reductions in plaque](#) and gum bleeding than sugar-free chewing gum.

This might seem odd since sugary substances aren't usually considered suitable for oral health. However, given honey's natural antibacterial properties, the research suggests that it is more likely to fight off causes of tooth decay than cause cavities.

6. Improves Digestive Health

Raw honey is recognized as a prebiotic food, meaning it can nurture the good bacteria living in your gut.

It may also be [a remedy for indigestion and ulcers](#), which is how it's been used in folk medicine for years. Antibacterial properties make honey a tough match for the Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) bacteria, which is known to cause stomach ulcers.

7. Keeps Blood Glucose Levels in Check

Even though it's composed of glucose and fructose, honey has a relatively [low glycemic index](#) (GI).

As a result, when [compared to refined sugar](#), honey can sweeten foods without causing a spike in blood sugar levels. For this reason, people with [Type 2 diabetes](#) may be able to enjoy it.

8. Helps Fend off Diseases

The phytonutrients found in honey, which contribute to its antioxidant and antibacterial powers, can also give your immune system a boost.

Moreover, since oxidative stress and inflammation can contribute to cardiovascular diseases and cancers, honey actively helps your body [prevent heart disease](#) and [cancer](#).

Bonus: Supports Skin Recovery

In addition to all the benefits of eating honey, certain types can be used in topical treatments. Believe it or not, [manuka honey](#) is an FDA-approved treatment for wound dressings. It's known to promote faster tissue regeneration and reduce the chance of infection.

Not bad, bees!

Harness the Power of Honey in Your Diet with Perfect Snacks

We love everything honey has to offer — from its antioxidant abilities to its role as a deliciously natural sweetener and preservative.

That's why you'll find pure, organic honey in all of our [Perfect Bars, Perfect Bites, and Perfect Kids](#). If you want to incorporate a little more honey into your diet and take advantage of the health perks, try one of these whole-food protein snacks today!