

The Surprising Natural Remedy Most Commonly Used In America

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Low maintenance and quite simple to grow at home, it's easy to understand why Good Housekeeping magazine considers Aloe Vera the most commonly used natural remedy in America.

Aloe Vera's uses include small skin burn and sunburn treatment, skin moisturizer, and even detoxification drinks.

A favorite herb of many nations, Aloe Vera's origins are commonly believed to be in North Africa. The name Aloe Vera is derived from the Arabic word "alloe," which means "bitter," and "Vera," which means "real" in Latin.

A brief history of Aloe Vera tells us that while there are more than 300 species of Aloe, only 4 types of the species contain medicinal properties. The only plant considered "true aloe" is Aloe barbadensis miller. The brief history also states that the antiquity of Aloe is confirmed by Egyptian papyri dating back to 1500 BC. The Egyptians called aloe the "plant of immortality" and used it to treat infections, kill parasites and treat skin diseases.

Egyptian queens credited aloe as their beauty source and Egyptian pharaohs took aloe with them into their afterlife.

Today, Aloe Vera is so abundant, useful and adaptable, that it is found growing wild in almost every tropical region all around the world. If you don't live in a tropical environment, or you simply want to manage the growth of your own Aloe Vera, here is our guide for growing this amazing plant both indoors and out.

First, keep in mind that Aloe Vera is incredibly tolerable, so breathe easy. While it prefers lots of sunshine, it will still tolerate low light and thrives best with infrequent watering. In fact, overwatering aloe is much more likely to kill the plant than underwatering will.

[This is the Best Natural Painkiller, and Grows in Your Backyard!](#)

Here are a few tips for keeping your plant plump, green and steadily growing:

Tips For Growing Aloe Vera Plants Indoors

Soil

Indoors, your aloe plant needs to be in sandy, well-drained potting soil. You can make [ideal soil](#) yourself by mixing equal parts potting soil with sand or use an organic cactus and succulent mix.

Planters

Ideally, terra cotta pots work best with aloe because they let soil dry quicker than glazed or plastic pots will. You'll need a container that is just big enough to contain the roots and support the weight of the plant's leaves without toppling over.

Light Conditions

Sunny, bright lighting conditions are ideal for your aloe plant, although it will tolerate with even just a little bit of sunshine. Your plant may go dormant and stop growing if left in extremely low lighting conditions, until more sunlight is available.

Watering

Watering heavily, then allowing the potting soil mix to completely dry before watering again is most ideal for this dryland plant. Limp, brown leaves are a symptom of overwatering. You may only need to water about every other week or less, especially during winter or in low lighting locations. Watering aloe every day, or keeping the soil mix moist will rot out your plant's roots.

During the Summer, feel free to move your potted Aloe Vera plants outdoors. Put them in a shady location to avoid overexposure to sun at first, then move them a little more into the sun every day until they are able to handle full days of full sun.

Tips For Growing Aloe Vera Outdoors

If you live in a warmer climate, your Aloe Vera will thrive all year long outdoors. Begin by finding out your [USDA Plant Hardiness Zone](#).

Aloe leaves will burn or die in freezing temperatures, but as long as the soil does not freeze, the roots may survive and new sprouts will appear. Cover your aloe plants with blankets if temperatures threaten to drop below 40 degrees. As long as it is growing in soil with proper drainage, your aloe plants will continue to thrive.

Again, there is no need to water it every day, as overwatering aloe will rot the roots and kill your plant. If you do water between rains, give the plant a good soaking and let the soil then dry completely.

Flowering

Every now and then, your Aloe Vera plant may sprout up a nice, tall stalk of little, bell-shaped flowers. After the flowers have faded, you'll want to snip off the flower stalk from near the base.

Repotting

Aloe Vera plants prefer snug conditions rather than roomy ones, so there is no rush to repot your plants. If your plant grows big enough to tip the pot over, however, it's time to move the plant into a slightly larger planter. Your aloe plant may begin to get "leggy" as it grows and older leaves at the bottom of the plant dry out, causing it to develop bare stems.

If this is a problem for you, dump out the plant's root ball and shake off the potting mix. If you find that the bottom roots are dry and brown, snip those off, and leave the light-colored, plump roots alone. Then, repot your aloe plant in the same container (or a deeper one if necessary) and cover the bare stem with the potting mix. The stem will eventually sprout its own roots.

Propagation

It's common with aloe plants for smaller plants to develop next to your main plant, if the roots have filled up its current pot. When this happens, you can dump out the root ball onto a workspace and carefully tease apart the roots of the different plants. Then, repot each new plant in its own pot. It is also possible to start more plants using a few 3 inch long leaf tips. Save the remainder of the leaf to harvest aloe vera gel. Take the 3 inch long leaf tip, and place it with sliced end down into its own pot filled with potting mix. You could also let the cut leaves sit out for a week or so to give the end time to dry out and improve its chances of developing new plants.

Dipping the dried sliced end in honey before planting it also improves the chances of new plants growing. Keep an eye on your new plants. Some of the leaves will dry up or rot - these, you'll want to pull out and discard. Others will be firm, with tiny new leaves forming around the base. Once the newly formed plants reach a couple of inches in height, again, carefully tease apart the roots, and plant them in small single containers.

Putting Your Aloe Vera To Use

To treat small burns or sunburns, the simplest way to use your Aloe Vera is just to snap or slice off a leaf and rub the wet end on the burn. If you find you don't get enough juice that way, cut a leaf off from as near to the plant's stem as possible. Then, cut lengthwise slits in each leaf. Using a spoon, scrape the gel out from each half. You can then use it right away or store it in the refrigerator for up to a week. For longer storage, freeze the gel-like juice in ice cube trays.

Dr. Josh Axe, DNM, DC, CNS, a certified doctor of natural medicine, doctor of chiropractic and clinical nutritionist discusses the many uses of Aloe Vera in his work "Food Is Medicine". In 2009, a [systematic review summarized 40 studies](#) that involved using aloe vera for dermatological purposes.

The results suggest that oral administration of aloe vera in mice works effectively to heal wounds, can decrease the number and size of papillomas (small growths on the skin), and reduce the incidence of tumors by more than 90 percent in the liver, spleen and bone marrow. The studies also showed that Aloe Vera effectively treats genital herpes, psoriasis, dermatitis, frostbite, burns and inflammation. It can be used safely as an antifungal and antimicrobial agent.

Dr. Axe also lists the following fascinating nutritional facts about Aloe Vera:

Aloe Vera contains many vitamins and minerals vital for proper growth and function of all the body's systems. Here's an easy explanation of Aloe Vera's active components:

- Aloe Vera contains antioxidant vitamins A, C and E — plus vitamin B12, folic acid and choline.
- It contains eight enzymes, including aliiase, alkaline phosphatase, amylase, bradykinase, carboxypeptidase, catalase, cellulase, lipase and peroxidase.
- Minerals such as calcium, copper, selenium, chromium, manganese, magnesium, potassium, sodium and zinc are present in aloe vera.
- It provides 12 anthraquinones — or compounds known as laxatives. Among these are aloin and emodin, which act as analgesics, antibacterials and antivirals.
- Four fatty acids are present, including cholesterol, campesterol, beta-sisosterol and lupeol — all providing anti-inflammatory results.
- The hormones called auxins and gibberellins are present; they help with healing wounds and have anti-inflammatory properties.
- Aloe Vera provides sugars, such as monosaccharides (glucose and fructose) and

polysaccharides.

Dr. Axe also recommends the following doses:

- For constipation take 100–200 milligrams of aloe vera daily.
- For wound healing, psoriasis and other skin infections, use 0.5 percent aloe extract cream three times daily.
- For dental plaque and gum disease, use a toothpaste that contains aloe vera for 24 weeks
- For high cholesterol, take one capsule of aloe vera containing 300 milligrams twice daily for two months.
- For inflammatory bowel disease, take 100 milliliters twice daily for four weeks.
- For skin burns, use a 97.5 percent aloe gel on the burn until it's healed.
- For dry scalp or dandruff, add a teaspoon of aloe gel to shampoo.
- To protect your skin from infection and bacteria, add a teaspoon of aloe gel to lotion.

And cautions against these possible side effects:

Aloe latex should not be taken in high doses because it can cause side effects, such as stomach pain and cramps. Long-term use of large amounts of aloe latex might also cause diarrhea, kidney problems, blood in the urine, low potassium, muscle weakness, weight loss and heart issues.

Don't take aloe vera, either gel or latex, if you're pregnant or breast feeding. There are some reports of aloe causing miscarriage and birth defects. Children younger than 12 years old may experience abdominal pain, cramps and diarrhea, so I don't recommend Aloe Vera for child use either.

- If you have diabetes, some research suggests aloe might lower blood sugar, so if you take aloe by mouth and you have diabetes, monitor your blood sugar levels closely.
- If you have intestinal conditions such as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis or obstruction, don't take aloe latex if you have any of these conditions because it's a bowel irritant.
- Don't take aloe latex if you have hemorrhoids because it could make the condition worse.
- High doses of aloe latex have been linked to kidney failure and other serious conditions, so don't take aloe latex if you have kidney problems.
- Aloe might affect blood sugar levels and could interfere with blood sugar control during and after surgery. Stop taking aloe at least two weeks before a scheduled surgery.
- If you take digoxin (Lanoxin), don't use aloe latex because it works as a stimulant laxative and decreases potassium levels in the body; low potassium levels can increase the risk of side effects when taking this medication.

Before taking aloe vera, consult your doctor if you take the following medications:

- Diabetes medications
- Sevoflurane (Ultane)
- Stimulant laxatives
- Warfarin (Coumadin)
- Diuretic medications (water pills)

So, as you can see, Aloe Vera is a wonderful plant filled with seemingly countless benefits to the human body, and is super easy to grow.

Do you have more ideas for Aloe Vera uses? I want to hear from you! Let me know in the comments

below!



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