

ALOE VERA, panacia or old wives' tales? (USE IN DENTISTRY)

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"Recently there has been a tremendous surge of interest in old plants. . . . One of these "forgotten" plants is the Aloe Vera, or sometimes referred to as the "Medicine Plant". . . .

"In South and Central America, as well as Mexico, the Indians have used Aloe Vera juice for centuries for countless remedies. The remedies range from burns, longevity, sexual prowess, prostatitis, bladder and kidney infections, dysentery and all types of stomach and intestinal disorders, including peptic and duodenal ulcers. Suffice to say that nearly all Mexican families have an Aloe Vera plant growing adjacent to the home.

"My first personal experience with Aloe Vera juice was in the summer of 1961. My wife and I had been fishing in the surf on Padre Island for about eight hours. We had protected our upper bodies against the sun with a suntan oil, but had failed to protect our legs. Consequently when we tried to get out of bed the next morning we found we were so sunburned on the backs of our legs neither of us could get up. Our Mexican maid finally came into our bedroom and saw our predicament and ran to her home and brought a large Aloe Vera leaf, which she expertly skinned and applied the gel, or juice to our legs. In a matter of less than half an hour we were both able to get up, but stayed in bed all day with the Aloe Vera juice on our legs with the result that we had no pain and no blistering and consequently no scarring. . . .

"In the fall of 1964, your writer had a complete upper givectomy performed. The right side had deeper involvements than the left side and I requested the periodontist not to put in the usual postoperative periodontal pack on the right side. It is well known how extremely sensitive denuded alveolar bone can be. With misgivings he acceded to my wishes. He put in the usual pack on the left side and nothing on the right side. At about the time the anesthetic began to leave I started bathing the area with Aloe Vera juice and I actually never felt a particle of pain. The right side healed very rapidly and by the time I had the pack removed from the left side I had been chewing right along on the unpacked right side. Whenever I felt any discomfort I would simply bathe the area, or hold the juice in the region for a few minutes. I can honestly say that I much preferred the unpacked side. Further work should be done in this field.

"Here in the Rio Grande Valley we hear of countless cases of people who have suffered for years with digestive complaints singing the praises of Aloe Vera. Aloe Vera juice will heal canker sores, in the cheeks, tip of the tongue, and sore spots from dentures almost immediately. It will give immediate relief in cases of gastritis, indigestion, heartburn, hyperacidity, etc. Can these all be fish-wive's tales? . . . There are literally thousands of people taking the juice internally for all manner of digestive ailments and for general well being. I believe there can be found several uses for it in dentistry, where the surface has not even been scratched.