

# Health Watch - Alternative Path: Aloe, aloe - what's all this then?(Female Times)

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Going into a health shop or a pharmacy to look for a general pick me up can be a daunting task. With so many products around we're spoiled for choice.

Yet few products have stood the test of time like aloe vera. For thousands of years different cultures have found a wide range of benefits from this peculiar plant. Here is a sample:

Skin - Psoriasis, acne and eczema

Bowel - from constipation to inflammatory bowel disease

Arthritis - inflammation has been reduced.

Asthma - lessens allergic reactions and helps lung function.

Wounds - the Journal of Dermatologic Surgery and Oncology stated that skin recovered more quickly if dressed with aloe vera gel.

Diabetes - has been found in some cases to help lower blood sugar.

Immune System - improves defences against viruses, including HIV.

Fungal infections - of scalp, skin, digestive tract or genitals have been helped How does it work?

There are at least 75 nutritional substances in aloe vera e. g.

Lignan - helps other ingredients to penetrate the human skin.

Saponins - soap like molecules that have antiseptic properties.

Anthraquinones - these have antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral effects. Also analgesic, anti-inflammatory and laxative properties.

Minerals - calcium, iron, zinc, magnesium, manganese, chromium, potassium and copper.

Vitamins Amino Acids Sugars - good sugars that have strong anti-inflammatory properties.

Sterols - anti-inflammatory. There has been a tremendous amount of research and studies done in recognised institutions about the benefits of of aloe vera that back up what people have said for years.

What is also apparent is that the plant (or gel) itself is better than the sum of the individual components. In some way the synergistic balance out performs isolated components.

One has to be careful in choosing a product as some 'aloe' products have been found to contain very little aloe vera. A good product should have a bitter taste and contain 97-99 per cent pure aloe vera.

With this list of credits to its name it is not surprising that it has been called 'The Wand of Heaven'.

Consult your pharmacist or health shop.