

Aloe Vera: Its Potential Use in Wound Healing and Disease Control in Oral Conditions

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Aloe Vera has been shown to enhance defense mechanisms, and it has a variety of components to help combat periodontal disease and other oral conditions. As a periodontist utilizing aloe vera in various consistencies for the last 14 years with over 6,000 documented patients who have been treated with applications, I've observed remarkable healing, reduced edema, and pain control.

There are eight main uses of aloe vera in dental practice:

1. Applications directly to the the sites of periodontal surgery.
2. Applications to the gum tissues when they have been traumatized or scratched by toothbrush-dentifrice abrasion, sharp foods, dental floss, and toothpick injuries.
3. Chemical burns are relieved quickly from accidents with aspirin.
4. Extraction sites respond more comfortably and dry sockets do not develop when aloe vera is applied.
5. Acute mouth lesions are improved by direct application on herpetic viral lesions, aphthous ulcers, canker sores, and cracks occurring at the corners of our lips. Gum abscesses are soothed by the applications as well.
6. Other oral diseases chronic in nature respond with Lichen Planus and Benign Pemphigus. Even gum problems associated with AIDS and Leukemia patients receive relief. Migratory glossitis, geographic tongue and Burning Mouth Syndrome are improved.
7. Denture patients with sore ridges and ill-fitting dentures and partials can benefit as fungises and bacterial contamination reduce the inflammatory irritations.

8. Aloe vera can also be used around dental implants to control inflammation from bacteria contamination.

Other oral disorders such as Candidiasis, Desquamative Gingivitis, Vesiculobullous diseases, acute monocytic leukemia, hematological disorders and nutritional problems all respond to aloe vera use. Even diabetes mellitus, Sjorgen's Syndrome, menopausal patients and medications which can cause Xerostomia or dry mouth.

Interest is gathering momentum across our country as researchers are becoming interested in alternative therapy utilizing natural products versus synthetic agents. Aloe vera research is currently being undertaken at Oklahoma University, Baylor University, and Loma Linda.

Lastly, it was a privilege to use aloe vera on the bombing victims in the April 1995 disaster in Oklahoma City. The attendants, doctors and especially the injured learned that the healing capabilities of aloe vera far exceeded their expectations in pain control and healing time reduction.

Aloe vera has an unlimited future in new applications, and I sense in dentistry we are just on the cutting edge of promising utilization for anti-inflammatory procedure, antiviral, and immunological benefits for our patients.