

Therapeutic Effects of the Wonder Herb-Garlic

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Abstract: From times immemorial Garlic is used as a medicine. Garlic has been used for the treatment of minor ailments and also in the treatment of life threatening diseases like Arthritis and Diabetes. It is an important plant used in the folklore medicine and also in Ayurveda and Unani medicine

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Garlic is a member of Alliaceae and its botanical name is *Allium sativum*. Alliaceae includes Onion, Chive and Leek. Garlic has been originated from Central Asia, It has been used as a spice, food and as a folklore medicine. In traditional medicine garlic claims to possess chemicals having medicinal properties. Dioscorides in first century A.D. has written about the ability of garlic to clear the arteries. The Romans used Garlic poultices to prevent wound infections. Hippocrates, the father of Medicine made garlic a part of his therapeutic use, for pulmonary complaints, as a cleansing or purgative agent and for retarding uterine growths. The use of garlic as a food and as a medicinal agent has originated in Asia. Garlic is in wide use in China and formed part of the daily diet. Garlic grows underground in the form of a bulb, from which long green shoots emerge. The garlic cloves are enclosed in the paper like skin. The wonderful herbal plant contains numerous health promoting phyto-nutrients that have been proven beneficial against coronary heart diseases, infections and cancers. The herbal wonder drug is used for curing myriad of health problems. It also protects us from infections and gangrene.

The garlic compound, diallyl disulfide, appeared to inhibit tumor formation. Researchers show that diallyl disulfide enables the liver to detoxify cancer-causing agents. Garlic helps reduce blood pressure by thinning the blood and minimizes blood-lipids like cholesterol. Researchers have proven that a clove of garlic a day can reduce cholesterol level up to 9%. The sulphur compound alicin has antibiotic, anti-viral and anti-fungal properties; garlic has been used for skin infections such as Athletes' foot, herpes and warts. It is digestive and cures lung infections, diarrhoea, coughs and colds etc. Garlic is very useful in the treatment of Influenza and Bladder infections. Garlic can be used for the treatment of insect bites or stings, a clove of garlic is crushed and juice is applied on the infected part. Garlic improves immunity, cures acne and ear infection.

Garlic is rich in Vitamin C, Vitamin B6 and Manganese and low in calories. It also contains trace amounts of various other nutrients. Garlic cloves contain the amino acid alliin. Garlic has antioxidants which scavenge the free radicals; rebly increases bile production, lowers cholesterol and controls weight. It causes breakdown of blood clots and is an antibiotic for maintaining general health. Garlic has the ability to reduce blood sugar level by increasing release of insulin. It is an appetisor, anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, effective for treatment of arthritis and also a nerve tonic.

Garlic clove cleanses the blood supply in few hours. It is also used for fighting stress and fatigue. Garlic may help reduce bone loss through the increase of estrogen in females. Garlic contains nutrients that act as building blocks for healthy and strong bones. It reduces cold, enhances physical performance and induces growth of hair due to the presence of keratin in the high sulphur compounds.

This wonder herb garlic has myriads of medicinal uses, thereby including garlic in our every day diet. It has been reported by Researchers that aged garlic extracts reduce damage to the body, caused by free radicals. Garlic extracts have been reported to reduce levels of 8-iso Prostaglandin plasma and urine concentrations in smokers. The crushed garlic cloves can be consumed with milk. It is the best remedy for minor and major ailments and for strengthening the immune system. Owing to the medicinal benefit and demand for making pills, in pharmaceutical. Industry, there is a need for increase in productivity by different protocols in the laboratory, by the researchers in this field as the chemicals found in garlic are studied and extracted, for the treatment of dreadful diseases.

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Author Profile

Sadia Fatima received the B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees in Botany and has been awarded doctorate in EthnoBotany in the year 2010, from Osmania University and presently working as an Asst. Professor, teaching Botany, Taxonomy and Cyto genetics to degree and M.Sc. students.