

## Garlic Can Help You Fight Infections and Improve Your General Health

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Garlic benefits the circulatory system, helps against infections, improves blood sugar regulation, is good for the joints, and helps prevent cancer.

Garlic (*Allium sativum*) is a member of the onion genus and a near relative to the common onions. The plant originates from central Asia, but has been cultivated in the Mediterranean area and Africa for several thousand years. It has a history of use as spice and as a medicine plant for at least 7000 years.

The plant has a bulb at the base from which the stalk with leaves and flowers grows up. The plant will eventually grow several new bulbs around the base of the stalk. If let alone these new bulbs will separate and grow to new plants. When maturing these bulbs divide themselves into several number of sections called cloves that can easily be separated. All of the plant can be eaten, but the new developed bulbs are most used as spice and medicine, most often in mature stage with cloves. The bulbs are used in fresh form or let to age and one also makes watery or oily extracts to use from them.

When used fresh, one or a few cloves is a typical dose. Each clove can be chopped in small pieces or crushed and blended in water or some mossy food and then consumed, or used as spice in your food so that you get both the medical and culinary use of it at the same time.

Much of the taste in the garlic originates from the substance allicine. This substance and a lot of other present substances, especially organosulfuric compounds, are commonly thought to carry the medical effects. New research seems however to indicate that allicine after all is not necessary for the medical benefits to occur. The effective substances from fresh garlic are however volatile, but by aging these substances are converted to less volatile ingredients which still have a medical effect, but somewhat different from those in the fresh garlic. Garlic is used for several medical benefits, of which some are well documented, some supposed to be true by medical professionals and some anecdotal:

Garlic is beneficial for the health of the heart and blood circulation, but the specific effects are not all well studied yet. It is thought to help prevent or reduce atherosclerosis in the blood vessels, reduce the amount of the bad LDL lipoproteins, increase the good HDL lipoprotein amount, and help to reduce the amount of fat around the heart which can induce inflammation in the heart tissue. Manufacturers of products based on extracts from aged garlic claim that all these effects are well documented for that type of product.

Garlic seems to help reduce a too high blood pressure. Garlic reduces the tendency for the blood to coagulate within the blood vessels, and also otherwise supports good blood flow. Thereby it reduces the risk for blood clots, heart infarction and stroke. Garlic may also help the body to manage blood sugar better and will then reduce the severity of diabetes, especially diabetes type II.

Garlic has a well documented preventive effect upon the growth of bacteria. It has since long been used as a means to prevent and cure infections, also viral infections, for example cold, influenza, lung infections, infections around the teeth, skin infections and ailments which often have an infection as a base like stomach ulcer and diarrhea. A piece of garlic can be used as a preliminary remedy against infection in a tooth with caries until you can get to the dentist. Sliced garlic can also be applied on sores to prevent and combat infections.

Research indicate that components in garlic can kill slugs and snails, and thus be used as a non-polluting pesticide against attacks on crops from these animals, which actually seems to be more effective than conventional pesticides.

Regular consume of garlic seems to reduce the incidence of cancer in the lungs, stomach, liver, breast, brain, prostate and possibly other types of cancers, and steadily new scientific findings support claims for strong cancer-preventing effects. Some people claim that they have been able to get a manifest cancer stagnate or go away with a treatment regime where garlic is a main component. Scientific investigation has shown that sulfuric components in garlic help to kill several types of cancer cells, but the therapeutic value of garlic against manifest cancer has not been investigated well yet.

Garlic can help to prevent osteoarthritis in the hip joints. Osteoarthritis is caused by wearing in the joints without adequate repair activities, so garlic may increase the general ability of the joints to regain from damages.

Garlic in the amounts usually used as medicine do not have any serious complications for most people, but more than one clove of fresh garlic can irritate the stomach. Great amount of garlic may reduce too much the ability of the blood to coagulate and cause bleedings. Persons with bleeding tendencies should be careful about the amount used, and so also persons taking blood thinning medications. Some persons are allergic for garlic.

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Knut Holt is a business consultant and marketer focusing on the health field. At his site there is a lot information useful to improve health and fitness, including slimming and exercise advices. You can also find presentation of products to combat common health issues and to improve fitness

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