

The Amazing Health Benefits of Cloves

Cloves have been cultivated for at least 2,000 years. They are an important part of the spice trade and are highly valued for their medicinal properties.

The clove (*Syzygium aromaticum*, sometimes included in the genus *Eugenia*) comes from the Myrtaceae family, which is a pink flower bud of the clove tree that turns brown when dried.



Cloves have a warm, sweet, and aromatic flavour and an oily compound that is vital to their medicinal and nutritional properties. The Clove is indigenous to the Moluccas volcanic islands of Indonesia previously known as the Spice Islands.

Cloves have been used in the dental industry for years to deaden pain. According to a study at the University of Iowa, compounds in clove oil have shown "strong activity." It contains antimicrobial and antiviral compounds. Cloves have pain numbing, relieving and antiseptic properties.

Health Benefits of Cloves

- Nutrients

Cloves (*Eugenia aromatica*) are an excellent source of manganese. They are a very good source of vitamin C, K, and dietary fibre. They are a good source of calcium and magnesium.

- Anaesthetic and Analgesic

Eugenol is the principal chemical component of clove oil and is used in dentistry due to its analgesic, local anaesthetic, anti-inflammatory, and antibacterial effects. It is used in the form of a paste or mixture as dental cement, filler, and restorative material. Beta-caryophyllene, another component of clove oil, has also been shown to exhibit local anaesthetic activity.

- Anti Fungal

Eugenol is a chemical compound extracted from the essential oil of cloves and other spices. Eugenol has been shown to be an effective natural anti fungal against the *T. mentagrophytes* and *M. canis* dermatophytes (tinia or ringworm), and although tea tree oil is a more effective anti fungal, a combination of tea tree oil and eugenol was

found to be more effective. Tests have also demonstrated that essential oil of cloves to be effective against *Candida albicans*.

- Cloves can be used in relieving a toothache by placing a single clove on the aching tooth. Clove oil can also be used by soaking in some cotton wool and then placing the cotton wool on the aching tooth.
- Mosquito Repellent
the natural oil of clove is a natural mosquito repellent and can give protection against mosquitoes for 4-5 hours.
- Cancer
Preliminary studies have suggested the chemo preventive potential of clove for lung cancer, and to delay and reduce the formation of skin cancer.
- Cardiovascular Health
The compound eugenol from cloves has been found to be a potent platelet inhibitor (prevents blood clots).

Clove - Active compounds

Essential oil of clove has anaesthetic and antimicrobial qualities, and is sometimes used to eliminate bad breath or to ameliorate the pain of a bad tooth. It, or its main component eugenol, is used by dentists to anesthetize the gum before injecting Novocaine or similar anaesthetics, and is the characteristic odour of a dentist's office

The expert panel German Commission E has approved the use of clove as a topical antiseptic and anaesthetic.

Attributed Medicinal Properties

Folklore says that sucking on two whole Cloves without chewing or swallowing them helps to curb the desire for alcohol.

Traditional Chinese physicians have long used cloves to treat indigestion, diarrhoea, hernia, and ringworm, as well as athlete's foot and other fungal infections.

India's traditional Ayurvedic healers have used Cloves since ancient times to treat respiratory and digestive ailments.

The medieval German herbalists used cloves as part of anti-gout mixture.

Early American Eclectic physicians used cloves to treat digestive complaints, and they added it to bitter herbal medicines to make them more palatable. They were also the first to extract clove oil from the herbal buds, which they used on the gums to relieve toothache.

A few drops of the oil in water will stop vomiting, and an infusion will relieve nausea. Essential oil of clove is effective against strep, staph and pneumomocci bacteria.

Contemporary herbalists recommend cloves for digestive complaints and its oil for toothache. The primary chemical constituents include eugenol, caryophyllene, and tannins.

Cloves are said to have a positive effect on stomach ulcers, vomiting, flatulence, and to stimulate the digestive system. It has powerful local antiseptic and mild anaesthetic actions.

Japanese researchers have discovered that like many spices, clove contains antioxidants. Antioxidants help prevent the cell damage that scientists believe eventually causes cancer.

On the other hand, in laboratory tests, the chemical eugenol, has been found to be a weak tumour promoter, making clove one of many healing herbs with both pro- and anti-cancer effects. At this point, scientists aren't sure which way the balance tilts. Until they are, anyone with a history of cancer should not use medicinal amounts of clove. For otherwise healthy non-pregnant, non-nursing adults, powdered clove is considered nontoxic.

Additionally, dentists have used clove oil as an oral anaesthetic. They also used it to disinfect root canals. Clove oil still is an active ingredient in several mouthwash products and a number of over-the-counter toothache pain-relief preparations.

Cloves kill intestinal parasites and exhibits broad anti-microbial properties against fungi and bacteria, thus supporting its traditional use as a treatment for diarrhoea, intestinal worms, and other digestive ailments. Like many culinary spices, Cloves helps relax the smooth muscle lining of the digestive tract.

Interactions with Drugs

If you are taking prescription drugs, speak with your health care provider or pharmacist before using herbs or dietary supplements.

Clove may increase the risk of bleeding when used with anticoagulants (blood thinners) or antiplatelet drugs. Examples include warfarin (Coumadin), heparin and clopidogrel (Plavix). Some pain relievers may also increase the risk of bleeding if used with clove. Examples include aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) and naproxen (Naprosyn, Aleve, Anaprox).

Clove may lower blood sugar levels. Caution is advised if you are taking prescription drugs that may also lower blood sugar levels. Patients taking oral drugs for diabetes or using insulin should be monitored closely by their health care provider while using clove. Dosing adjustments may be necessary. Based on studies in animals, clove may increase the ability of acetaminophen (Tylenol) to reduce fever. Clove may also reduce the ability of the body to sense pain and therefore may increase the effects of pain-relieving drugs that are applied topically as cream.