

CRITICAL THINKING ASSIGNMENT

“HEALTH BENEFITS OF APPLE CIDER VINEGAR”

FNES 203

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A year ago, I came across a very interesting claim “the health benefits of apple cider vinegar”; this claim caught my attention, so I started researching and found a significant amount of information and studies discussing the characteristics and health benefits of apple cider vinegar. It turns out that several studies prove that this ancient remedy is loaded with health benefits. Apple cider vinegar is said to aid in regulating blood sugar levels, supports weight loss, alleviates the symptoms of acid reflux, lowers cholesterol, and it can even help you to get rid of a sore throat.

Regulating blood sugar levels, perhaps for me, this is the most important health benefit from apple cider vinegar because it helped me with a condition called insulin resistance. Vinegar is anti-glycemic; therefore, when ingested in small amounts (1 to 2 tablespoons of vinegar in 8 ounces of water) right before a meal, it helps to regulate a spike in glucose levels. Apparently, this is because the acetic acid in the vinegar inhibits the enzymes that help digest starch. ¹ When starch is not completely digested that means that carbohydrates are not converted into sugar, hence you get a smaller glycemic response. But, it gets even better, because the undigested starch becomes prebiotic, meaning that as it passes from the small intestine to the large intestine it becomes food for the microbiome in the digestive system, and a well-fed gut bacteria generally translate to a healthier you because these microorganisms help support good digestion and our immune systems, among other benefits.

Supports weight loss, there are several studies that confirm that apple cider vinegar promotes weight loss. In one study, consuming 30 mL (2 tablespoons) per day of apple cider vinegar over 12 weeks resulted in nearly 4 pounds of weight loss with no other modifications to diet or lifestyle. ² Another study shows that apple cider vinegar may also increase feelings of fullness and help one eat fewer calories, which can lead to weight loss. ³ However, just because apple cider vinegar helps weight loss does not mean that is going to be a quick fix. To really see results, we need to combine it with a healthy diet and active lifestyle.

Alleviates the symptoms of acid reflux, when a person feels acid burning his or her esophagus (acid reflux), it seems quite illogical to ingest even more acid instead of taking an antacid like Tums or Rolaids. However, in many cases, acid reflux is caused by not having enough acid in the stomach. It is the acid itself that tells the lower esophageal sphincter to tighten and close off. If a person does not produce enough acid, the lower esophageal sphincter is going to relax, this causes the person to get a reflux (backflow) of acid into the esophagus. Drinking apple cider vinegar helps provide relief from acid reflux by introducing more acid into the digestive tract, thus preventing acid backflow. ⁴

Lowers cholesterol, apple cider vinegar can promote heart health by helping to keep cholesterol levels low. Cholesterol is a fat-like substance that can build up in the arteries, causing them to narrow and harden. High cholesterol levels stress the heart, forcing it to work harder to push blood throughout the cardiovascular system. A study reported that: 0.3% dietary acetic acid (the active ingredient in vinegar) reduced serum cholesterol and triglycerides in rats fed a cholesterol-rich diet. ⁵ Apple cider vinegar also contains the antioxidant chlorogenic acid a phytochemical also found in coffee. Chlorogenic acid acts as an antioxidant by binding to cholesterol molecules and preventing oxidation. ⁶ This is a very important factor in reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Getting rid of a sore throat, apple cider vinegar contains anti-bacterial properties which fight the infection causing a sore throat. The acidity in vinegar decreases the pH of the tissue, which prevents the growth of bacteria. Raw apple cider vinegar contains prebiotic inulin (fiber) which increases the white blood cells and T-cells⁷ count and strengthens the immune system. It acts as a natural expectorant that loosens and thins the phlegm in the throat which in turn makes it easier to breathe and swallow. ⁸

As a result of both my research and my own experience, I not only believe the claims about the health benefits of apple cider vinegar, I have witnessed the positive effects on myself as well as those around me. The plethora of studies about this ancient remedy show enough evidence to prove that the benefits are real and that we should include apple cider vinegar in our diets.

References:

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