

## Significance of Aloe Vera in Ayurveda and Lifestyle

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### SUMMARY

The aloe vera plant has been used for thousands of years, since as early as 1750 BC. Aloe vera is a very useful succulent plant found everywhere and hence easily accessible. Aloe vera its gel ; juice are beneficial in different ways for different purposes and is scientifically proven too. Aloe latex can be used in laxatives however there are no proper studies done yet. Ancient Ayurvedic text also have descriptions about aloe vera and its different uses for different diseases. Aloe vera is mentioned as a plant which maintains youth i.e rejuvenates and heals the body Aloe can be used for jaundice, spleenomagly, and wound healing etc. While the known biological activities of Aloe vera will be briefly discussed, it is the aim of this article is to further highlight recently discovered effects and applications of the leaf gel. These effects include the potential of whole leaf or inner fillet gel liquid preparations of Aloe vera in daily life as well as in Ayurvedic preparations.

### INTRODUCTION

Aloe vera is a succulent plant species of genus aloe. The name Aloe vera is derived from the Arabic word “Alloeh” meaning “shining bitter substance,” while “vera” in Latin means “true”. It is widely distributed native to south africa hence considered as an invasive species in many world regions The Aloe plant is grown in warm, tropical areas and cannot survive freezing temperatures such as during winters. In southern Africa, it is a popular ornamental, and its juice is used alone or in preparations to soothe minor burns and skin irritations. The plant Aloe vera has a history dating back to biblical times. History reveals that Queen Cleopatra and Queen Nefertiti (Queens of Egypt well known for their beauty) included Aloe in their beauty regimens. It is a perennial succulent xerophyte, which develops water-storage tissue in the leaves to survive in dry areas of low or erratic rainfall hence it has the ability to adapt the environment it grow in. In genus aloe 1,055 scientific plant names are derived Of these 516 are accepted species names. Further the Plant List includes 252 scientific plant names of infraspecific rank for the genus Aloe. Only two species are grown commercially: Aloe barbadensis Miller and Aloe arborescens. Aloe vera contains : vitamins, enzymes, minerals, sugars, lignin, saponins, salicylic acids and amino acids. C-glycosides,(barbaloin & isobarbaloin) and aloe-emodin are the major constituents

### Hierarchy

Aloe vera is generally famous for its anti-inflammatory and soothing and moisturizing properties but it's potential is much more than an soothing ingredient. Aloe vera has so many health and healing properties which many are unaware of

The botanical name of Aloe vera is *Aloe barbadensis miller*

### Taxonal hierarchy

Kingdom: Plantae

Division: Magnoliophyta

Class: Liliopsida

Order: Asparagales

Family: Asphodelaceae

Genus: Aloe

### Cultivation

These are the three mainly cultivated types of aloe. The major planting areas of Aloevera are India, Australia, USA, Japan and Europe. In India it is found in Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal states. Certain other types like Zanzibar, Uganda, Natal and Hyderabad aloe are having

good quality of “aloe gel”. Aloe can be found in Mexico, the Pacific Rim countries, India, South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Australia, and Africa. In United States: - most of the Aloe is grown in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, Florida and Southern California.

### Internationally:

- Gurguva aloe                      - Aloe vera Aloe barbadensis)
- Cape aloe                         - Aloe ferox
- Sagotrin aloe                     - Aloe perryi

### Aloe Vera and Ayurveda

Short introduction to Ayurveda: आयुर्नेन वेत्ति इत्यायुर्वेद : I (- ‘आयु’ means life , ‘वेत्ती’ means science of knowledge. The science of life or knowledge of life is termed as Ayurveda. Some say that is a pseudoscience but Ayurveda can be termed as a way of healthy life. The fundamentals on which the Ayurvedic system is based are essentially true for all ages and so can be easily adopted time after time, century after century. And hence one should adapt ayurveda in order to lead a healthy happy and satisfied life

### Aloe vera according to Ayurveda

In Sanskrit, Aloe Vera is called Ghrita – Kumari, which means „young girl”. This name is given to it because the Vedas believed that the plant gives the woman youth and it has a regenerating effect on the females.

### RASAPANCHAKA (five qualities of substance)

RASA indicates nothing but taste which in case of ALOE VERA is Tikta Madhura i.e spicy and sweet GUNA indicates the nature SNIGDHA PICCHILA (moisturizing and slimness).

VIPAAKA is the process of transformation after digestion which in case of ALOE VERA is KATU i.e spicy

VIRYA means the potency which exists in the substance aloe vera contains SITA(cold potency)

PRABHAVA of aloe vera i.e the action of Aloe vera is BHEDANA which causes the breakdown of grathit (harden) mala and removes it through anal route

Hence , Aloe vera can be used in laxatives. Aloe juice has balancing effect on all three DOSHAS, but its effect is stronger on PITA DOSHA. It helps to rejuvenate and heal the skin from within, promoting the growth of collagen and reducing signs of ageing. Aloe also has very beneficial anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties that help to keep illnesses at bay. The Ayurvedic medicine places this healing plant in the group of the satvic foods, which means that it can be used in a satvic diet by people who are engaged in spiritual practices, striving for improvement

**Pharmacological Actions:** Anti-inflammatory , Coolant , Laxative , Diuretic , Aphrodisiae

### Therapeutic Administrations

Kamala ( Jaundice); The juice extracted from kumari (Aloe vera ) ia used as Nasya (snuff) for Kamala (jaundice)

Pleeha vrddhi(spleenomegaly): Juice of kumari(Aloe vera ) mixed with Haridra (Curcuma longa) taken internally will relieve Pleeha vrddhi (spleenomegaly)

Varna(wound): Kalka (paste) prepared from kumari rosa (juice pf aloe vera) and Jiraka ( cuminum cyminum) if applied will relieve burning sensation and inflammation

Matra (dosage): Swarasa (leaf juice) - 10 to 20 ml

The above are the methods of using Aloe vera in Ayurvedic medicine , however there are many ways Aloe vera can be used in daily life for health benefits.

### Aloe Vera and Lifestyle :

#### Aloe vera for health

Relieves heartburn : can reduce the symptoms of heartburn without any uncomfortable side effects.

Treats constipation : While drinking aloe vera juice is unlikely to cause digestive issues in people with normal bowel movements, it has shown promise as a way to relieve constipation.

May improve IBS symptoms: In one trial, people with IBS who drank aloe vera juice said some of their symptoms improved. However, scientists need to do more research.

Oral health : The using of aloe can also have benefits in the following areas: post-treatment after gum surgery, various oral lesions including canker sores, dry mouth, gum abscesses, inflamed tongue, gum tissue damaged by sharp toothbrushes, abrasive toothpastes.

Aloe vera is effective in treating cavities as it inhibits the growth of the bacteria that causes dental caries.

This plant accelerates healing and reduces pain associated with canker sores, which are blisters on the lips or mouth

### **Aloe vera for skin**

- Helps soothe sunburn : Aloe Vera gel has cooling properties and is anti-inflammatory. Hence, it is one of the most natural remedies for sunburn or burnt skin

- Helps to moisturize the skin :Aloe Vera gel when used as a moisturizing gel doesn't leave a greasy film on the face and the skin. In fact, it unclogs the pores and softens the skin.

- Boosts healing of wounds :It is now a known fact that Aloe Vera is highly beneficial for burns, cuts, and other injuries. This is because Aloe Vera boosts the healing of wounds, i.e., reduces the time of healing. This is true especially in the case of 1st degree and 2nd-degree burns. It's a great skin burn treatment. It also helps to speed up skin cell reproduction as much as eight times. Aloe Vera is also known to penetrate the epidermis, i.e., the outer layer of the skin faster than water.

- Fights skin-ageing:Aloe Vera gel has vitamin C and E, beta-carotene in abundance. Therefore, it has anti-ageing properties. Additionally, it helps to increase the production of collagen in the body and skin elasticity.

### **Aloe vera for hair**

- Helps in hair growth : Like skin reproduction, Aloe Vera gel helps in activating new hair growth as it increases blood circulation to the scalp.

- Keeps dandruff at bay : Aloe Vera helps in healing dry skin, fungal infections and excessively oily skin. All these are significant causes of dandruff. It is one of the **\*\*[natural ways to get rid of dandruff](https://pharomeasy.in/blog/5-simple-home-remedies-treating-dandruff/)\*\***

- Acts as a conditioner to the hair and scalp : Just as how it moisturizes the skin, Aloe Vera helps to condition the hair and soften it. Regularly applying Aloe gel to the hair and scalp helps to maintain the vitality of the hair and its shine

The above benefits of Aloe vera , but how to use them and what are the side effects ? Like every other thing in nature Aloe vera has it's side effects if not used or extracted properly .

### **How To Use Aloe Vera Correctly ?**

How to extract aloe gel from aloe vera :

- Harvest the larger 2-3 year old outer leaves, cut the leaves at the base, cutting the leaf at a slight angle. Select only firm, green healthy, undamaged leaves.

- First wash your hands, then wash the Aloe vera leaves and dry them with a paper towel

- To remove the latex from the Aloe vera leaf, place the leaf upright at an angle to allow the inedible dark yellow bitter latex to drain out for 10-15 minutes. The angled cut at the base of the leaf helps the latex drain out more easily, as only the one side rests with the plate. After the latex has drained out, wash the cut end of the leaf to remove any remaining latex, and pat gently with a clean paper towel to dry (This is an important as it helps to avoid any sideeffects that may happen )

- Cut off approximately 10cm (4") of the tip, as this part of the leaf contains very little gel and lots more latex.

- Cut off the serrated edges with a sharp knife

- Remove the outer green skin layer with a knife, filleting the skin away from the gel inside. You can also use a vegetable peeler for this task but make sure there is no green skin left behind in the gel though

- When the skin has been removed from one side, carefully turn the leaf over and remove skin from the other side, leaving the clear gel.

- The clear gel strips can also be gently washed under cold running water if you want to remove any remaining latex.

- Cut Aloe vera gel strips into cubes for storage or processing. The cubes can be placed into a blender and blended into a gel, or they can be placed on a tray covered with non-stick baking paper, put into the freezer and frozen, then put into a tightly sealed freezer bag for storage, where they can be kept for up to six months

**Extraction of Aloe vera juice**

- using a blender to liquefy the gel, it will froth up quite a bit, so just let the gel settle and it will return to the correct consistency on its own.
- Transfer the aloe to a blender along with the water, lemon juice, and sweetener.
- Blend until smooth (it will be very frothy).
- Filter it.

**Ways To Add Aloe Vera In Our Life :**

Many brands now a days add aloe vera In their ingredients list, however we don't need to buy such expensive products when we could get better results with diy face packs i.e we could make skin beneficial and skin healing packs at home with proper extraction of Aloe vera gel as instructed in (5.1) the article

**Face Packs :**

For dull skin – Aloe Vera + Turmeric + Honey facemask :Turmeric has healing properties and contains antioxidants that work to brighten up your complexion and even out your skin tone. Aloe Vera, when teamed with honey, uses its anti-inflammatory compounds to calm your skin down and prevents breakouts

To remove sun tan – Aloe Vera + Lemon facemask :\*\*\*\* For this one, all you need to do is mix equal quantities of aloe vera gel and lemon juice. Gently apply this concoction on the tanned portion of your skin, allow it to dry for 10 to 15 minutes, and wash off. This one is perfect for regular summer use as it will strip your skin of that tan and leave it hydrated

For oily, greasy skin – Aloe Vera + Cucumber : Tan, sunburn, oily T zone and pimples are all the favours that summer will do to your skin. Luckily for you, this aloe vera-based face pack will help you cleanse your skin and restore the moisture balance thus resolving your summer skin woes. Apply a paste of both the ingredients onto your skin for 15 minutes once every week, to rid your skin of the oil, dirt and impurities

For clogged pores – Aloe Vera + Masoor Dal (Red lentil) + Tomato paste : Masoor dal is the best exfoliating agent that nature has to offer. And when it is teamed with the very versatile Aloe, it gives you a face pack perfect for summer skin. While the lentil helps scrub off the dead skin cells, unclogged pores, black and whiteheads; aloe makes sure it retains the moisture in your skin and doesn't make it too dry. Tomatoes again are packed with antioxidants that work to remove tan

For skin dryness – Aloe Vera + Banana + Honey :\*\* Banana is rich in fats, which helps hydrate your skin and keeps it moisturised. Honey on the other hand has anti-bacterial, anti-fungal properties which help cure patchy, dry skin thus leaving your skin deeply nourished. These ingredients along with aloe also tighten your pores and improve its elasticity.

For pimples and breakouts – Aloe Vera + Neem :\*\* When neem leaves with its anti-microbial properties are employed on your skin it works to cure skin acne. Neem also has anti-bacterial properties which helps clean pores and thus prevent breakouts and pimples.

Aloe vera + Neem + Rose water:Go ahead, grind neem leaves in rose water and then add aloe vera gel to it. Apply this paste onto your skin and let it dry for 15 minutes. Wash off with cool water for best results , the salicylic acid and antibacterial properties in neem and rosewater will help clean pores and heal acne

For smooth skin – Aloe Vera + Vitamin E :\*\* This face mask rich in antioxidants will remove any spots or blemishes on your face, thus giving you smooth, glowing skin.To prepare this mask, you'll simply need one Vitamin E capsule and some freshly extracted aloe vera gel. Blend aloe vera gel with the oil from the capsule and apply the mixture to your face. Once dry, remove the face mask by washing your face with cold water. Repeat this every week for smoother skin.

To moisturise – Aloe Vera + squalane oil/ rosehip oil :\*\* depending on the choice of facial oils used the properties of face pack changes this face pack does not need to be washed .

If SQUALANE OIL is used it is a great moisturizer as it is easily absorbed and prevents water loss from the skin it's natural antioxidant properties that have been found to fight free radical damage in skin gives anti-inflammatory and anti-aging properties combined with aloe vera it becomes a dupe hydrating and healing mask that can be used everyday

if ROSEHIP OIL is used it becomes a powerful acne fighting combo as vitamins — A, C, and E — which help with acne prevention and reduction by increasing skin cell turnover, are present in rosehip oil and the antioxidants and salicylic acid in Aloe vera cleans the pores and also moisturizes the skin

For younger-looking skin – Aloe Vera + Carrots : Carrots are a rich source of beta-carotene, a skin-friendly form of vitamin A that supports healthier, younger-looking skin. When you combine it with aloe vera, it also reduces sunburn and works doubly well for fighting signs of ageing.

To prepare this mask, you'll need 1 teaspoon aloe vera gel, 1 tablespoon finely shredded carrot and 1 egg white. Combine all three and beat the mixture till it turns frothy. Apply it on the face using a brush and let it dry before rinsing with warm water.

### **Hair Masks:**

Aloe vera gel or juice can be applied after shampoo as a conditioner

However once in a while the masks mentioned below can be used for healthy Hair

To moisturise hair: Aloe vera and banana mask\*\* Take 1 aloe vera leaf and scoop out the pulp from the leaf. Take two medium-sized bananas and put the two (aloe vera gel and banana cut into pieces) in a blender to form a smooth paste. Apply on clean hair and leave for two hours. Wear a shower cap. After that wash off with a mild shampoo.

For soft and long hair: Aloe vera and onion mask\*\* Mix onion juice and aloe vera gel and massage the mixture into your scalp and tips of the hair. Let the mixture rest for an hour, and then wash off with a mild shampoo and conditioner. This combination is supposed to make your hair soft and promote hair growth

To treat dry, frizzy hair: Aloe vera and egg mask\*\* If you are okay with using eggs on your hair, this is a great mask. Make a paste using one egg and three teaspoons of aloe vera gel. Apply the mixture to your hair - use a brush - and let the mixture sit for half an hour. Put on a shower cap. After 30 minutes, shampoo your hair thoroughly. Both egg and aloe vera gel have highly nourishing properties and this can do wonders for dry and frizzy hair. But take note, not everyone can tolerate the smell of raw eggs, so use this only if you are comfortable with this.

For shiny hair: Aloe vera and yoghurt hair mask\*\* For natural shiny hair, use an aloe vera and yoghurt pack. According to studies, probiotics in yoghurt help in tackling dandruff as well. Mix two teaspoons of fresh aloe vera gel with two teaspoons of yoghurt, and one teaspoon of honey. You can also add one teaspoon of olive oil. Apply the mixture to your hair and scalp and massage your head. After half hour, wash off and get those beautiful, shiny locks. For best results, use once a week.

For flaky scalp : Aloe and ACV hair mask\*\* For a quick and easy dandruff detox, mix fresh aloe vera gel and apple cider vinegar in the ratio 2:1. Apply all over your hair and scalp, leave for 20 minutes and wash with an anti-dandruff shampoo. Do this twice a month to make sure you are not overburdening your scalp with vinegar. If you suffer from dry ends, make sure to add some honey to the mask as well.

### **Aloe Juice and its Consumption:**

Aloe vera Juice can also be consumed for attaining health benefits described as follows :

Drink pure aloe vera juice to enjoy its natural flavor. Aloe vera has a slightly bitter taste which some find delicious. If you like it, you can buy pure aloe juice at a pharmacy or online or best prepare it at home by following (5.1 and 5.2) . You can also drink it diluted in some water. Pure aloe vera has been shown to reduce the symptoms of acid reflux and ulcerative colitis. To experience these benefits, consume 3 to 6 tablespoons (1.5 to 3 fluid ounces) of pure aloe juice daily. Hence, consumption of Aloe vera juice daily can provide many health benefits. You could add flavorings like honey lemon and increase the nutritive index of the juice. You could even add different juices with aloe juice for eg. orange juice , watermelon juice, grape juice etc. Aloe gel can be added in your morning smoothies for more nutritive benefits

### **Possible side effects:**

Each and every thing that exists has its side effects if not used correctly Aloe vera is no exception to this universal truth. If not used properly or not extracted properly it could have as dramatic side effects as its benefits . AS Aloe vera is very beneficial for overall body and health the latex in it can cause fatal side effects every side effect caused due to Aloe vera is due to the consumption of latex in it . The following are the some possible side effects

- Aloe latex or whole-leaf extract taken orally might be unsafe and is likely unsafe in high doses. Taking 1 gram a day of aloe latex for several days can cause acute kidney failure and can be fatal. Aloe latex might also have the potential to cause cancer. Other side effects include abdominal cramps and diarrhea.

- Pregnancy and breast-feeding: Aloe gel and latex are possibly unsafe when taken by mouth. There is a report that aloe was associated with miscarriage. It might also increase the risk for birth defects. Do not take aloe by mouth if you are pregnant or breast-feeding.
- Surgery: Aloe might affect blood sugar levels and could interfere with blood sugar control during and after surgery. Stop taking aloe at least 2 weeks before a scheduled surgery
- Kidney problems: High doses of aloe latex have been linked to kidney failure and other serious conditions
- Be aware if you have any allergic reactions to aloe vera
- If you're using steroid creams such as hydrocortisone, be careful with aloe vera. It can increase the amount of cortisone absorbed by your skin.
- There are also potential interactions with medications like anticoagulants and diabetes drugs.

### CONCLUSION:

This is how we discussed the significance of Aloe vera in Ayurveda and daily life. Aloe vera has many health and healing properties, including relieving heartburn, treating constipation, improving IBS symptoms, and boosting the healing of wounds. Aloe vera is also beneficial for skin and hair, helping to soothe sunburn, moisturize the skin, and promote hair growth. The article provides instructions on how to extract Aloe vera gel and juice and how to use it in face packs and as a drink i.e proper use of aloe vera according to its properties. However, it is essential to use Aloe vera correctly to avoid possible side effects, including abdominal cramps, diarrhea, and kidney problems.

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