

Garlic

By Kami McBride

So many of our foods have highly medicinal properties, but a lot of that knowledge has fallen out household awareness. Not so with garlic. It is one of the foods that most everyone still knows about as a cold and flu remedy. Maybe it is the smell that won't let us forget its power. It is the number one selling herb in Germany and the second biggest selling herbal supplement in the United States.

In Ayurvedic medicine garlic is called the slayer of monsters. Odysseus used garlic wine to save himself from the spells of the sorceresses. The Romans carried garlic into battle for protection. Garlic studies show again and again that garlic lives up to the age old lore that it is a powerful herb offering protection on many different levels

Garlic has been clinically studied as a heart medicine for thirty years. We know that eating one clove of garlic a day can help to reduce high blood pressure. It supports the good High Density Cholesterol while helping to lower overall cholesterol levels. Garlic prevents blood clots and protects arteries from age related stiffening.

With cardio vascular disease being a major cause of death in the United States I think we all need to eat more garlic.

Garlic contains several sulfur compounds that are anti-microbial. Garlic boosts the production of white blood cells helping to fight off bacteria, parasites and viruses. Studies have shown that garlic is effective against many anti-biotic resistant strains of bacteria. If you are getting sick, eat garlic.

The anti-microbial properties of garlic are stronger if the garlic is fresh. You may not feel like eating fresh raw garlic and for some people it causes digestive upset. Adding fresh minced garlic to food or putting it on bread with butter is a good way to help it go down easier. If I feel like I have been exposed to a cold or just feel a little run down, I keep the garlic press at the table and just press out fresh minced garlic onto whatever I am eating for dinner.

If you don't like fresh garlic or if it upsets your stomach, you can chop a clove in half and rub it on the bottom of your feet. The anti bacterial oils enter your blood stream through your feet and help you fight off a cold and flu without having to eat it! But watch out garlic rubbed on your feet can still cause garlic breath because the oils are in your system.

Here are a couple of my favorite garlic recipes:

Tamari Garlic

1 cup peeled garlic cloves chopped in half
2 cups tamari
1 cup honey

Put everything together in a quart mason jar and put in the refrigerator. Let it sit for three months. After this time the garlic mellows and has a wonderful taste. The shelf life is about one year. This is a favorite way to consume garlic around our house. We put the tamari on rice and add it to stir fries. The garlic itself absorbs the honey and develops a delicious taste. We snack on the garlic and add it to most steamed vegetable dishes.

Garlic for colds and flu

1 cup apple cider vinegar
5 peeled and chopped garlic cloves
2 tablespoons chopped ginger

Steep garlic and ginger in vinegar for one month in a sterile mason jar. Make sure you put a piece of wax paper on top of the jar between the glass and the metal lid or the vinegar will eat the metal on the lid. After one month, use a cotton cloth to strain the herbs out of the vinegar. Discard the herbs. Add ½ cup honey to the garlic and ginger infused vinegar. Store in the refrigerator and take one tablespoon up to five times a day at the onset of a cold. Shelf life: one year

Kami McBride has taught herbal medicine since 1988. Through her classes and personal wellness consultations she helps people understand how whole foods and herbal medicine are an important aspect of everyone's preventive health care plan. Kami has helped thousands of people learn to use herbs in their daily lives in ways that are healthy, safe and fun and she teaches classes in herbal medicine and women's health at her school and herb gardens in Vacaville, California. She can be reached at 707-446-1290 or www.livingawareness.com