



Use manuka honey to heal yourself

Manuka honey contains anti-bacterial properties and in a study conducted by the University of Sydney killed nearly every types of bacteria it was exposed to. Manuka honey is made by bees that feed on the flowers of the manuka bush, also known as the tea tree, in New Zealand. In Australia, the tree used to make manuka honey is called the jellybush. The honey is distinctively flavoured, darker and richer than other honey.

In recent tests conducted at Sydney University's School of Molecular and Microbial Biosciences, manuka honey killed every type of bacteria, including antibiotic-resistant "superbugs". The University of Waikato in New Zealand has formed the Waikato Honey Research Unit to study the composition of honey and its antimicrobial activity.

The curative properties of honey have been known to indigenous cultures for thousands of years, and dressing wounds with honey was common before the advent of antibiotics. New Zealand's Maori were the first to identify the healing properties of manuka and some of their remedies and tonics are still used today.

The finest-quality manuka honey, with the most potent antimicrobial properties, is produced from hives in wild, uncultivated areas. Since 2004, Britain's National Health Service has licensed the use of manuka honey wound dressings and sterilised medical-grade manuka honey creams.

The pros

- Manuka honey has an antibacterial component that sets it apart from other honeys. This activity is stable and doesn't lose its potency when exposed to dilution, heat or light.
- Manuka honey has been found to be effective against a range of bacteria including *Helicobacter pylori* (which causes most stomach ulcers); *Escherichia coli* (the most common cause of infected wounds) and *Streptococcus pyogenes* (which causes sore throats).
- Manuka honey is antimicrobial and antiviral. It is also an antioxidant that can help to increase vitality and immunity.
- Trials have indicated that manuka honey can heal wounds and skin ulcers that haven't responded to standard treatments.

The cons

- Honey in general is not suitable for babies under 12 months of age because it is a known source of the bacteria spores that cause botulism.
- Diabetics should also avoid or limit their intake of honey due to the high glucose content.
- Not all manuka honeys were born equal, so it can be hard to know what you're getting. Active manuka honey has stronger properties than regular manuka honey. The team at the Waikato Honey Research Unit are refining testing methods to identify and rate the potency of different manuka honeys.
- There are no known side effects of active manuka honey when used internally, unless you are allergic to honey. Occasionally, when active manuka honey is used on an external wound, it can sting because of its high activity level. In this case, use regular manuka honey instead.

How to use it

- Manuka honey can be applied topically to the skin as a balm for skin infections, bites and cuts.
- Take a spoonful orally to help soothe the throat and digestive tract.
- Eat it as you would any other honey product to maintain general health.

Farming Secrets says: Honey has natural properties but make sure it is unprocessed