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7 Reasons to Love Garlic

By Cat Ebeling

Garlic—it's been around forever, and quite frankly, kind of taken for granted. We know it's good for us, but it has a bad reputation for giving everyone stinky breath, so many avoid it. Whether you love garlic or avoid it like the plague, it is the heart of many cuisines all over the world, and many dishes would actually taste quite strange without it. But, besides its unique taste, garlic has amazing medicinal qualities that support your health—and your lovelife!

Garlic's pungent odor and sharp taste comes from the sulfur-containing compounds, primarily a substance called allicin. Allicin is known for its antibacterial, antifungal, and antioxidant properties and is a powerful component of garlic! Allicin has to be 'activated' in garlic in order to have the strongest effect. In fact, allicin is produced only when the garlic clove is crushed or chopped—a long-standing defense mechanism of the plant. Once you crush or mince the garlic, it has to sit for a minute, as the enzymes activate the powerful phytochemicals in the garlic and produce the allicin.

1. Garlic is a Natural Antibiotic

Antibiotic resistance is becoming a serious worldwide concern, as the overuse of antibiotics in large scale meat production has created a whole new group of antibiotic-resistant super bacteria. This makes even minor bacterial infections in humans a serious health issue, if there are no medical antibiotics that can kill the bacteria. Garlic has been shown in scientific studies to kill a variety of common and dangerous bacteria including: campylobacter jejuni (responsible for food poisoning, pseudomonas aeruginosa (pneumonia, and urinary infections), E.coli (food poisoning) staphylococcus aureus, klebsiella pneumonia (pneumonia, meningitis), shigella sonnei (diarrhea, dysentery), salmonella typhi (typhoid fever), as well as helicobacter pylori responsible for stomach ulcers and cancer.

2. Kills Candida Safely

Candida albicans is a fungus that can live in the digestive tract. Usually our beneficial bacteria can keep it under control, but candida is an opportunistic fungal infection that thrives off of glucose and starchy foods. If our diet is off, or our immune system compromised by allergies or other illnesses, it can grow out of control. For many women, this can be a problem, as candida can become an uncomfortable vaginal infection as well. For many people, candida can be chronic and cause brain fog, allergies, digestive issues, bloating, weight gain and more. Prescription anti-fungals are available, but they are harsh to our systems and hard on the liver. Garlic can't be beat! Research shows Allicin is as good as,

or more effective than common pharmaceuticals to suppress growth and kill off excess candida.

3. Stabilizes Blood Sugar

Obesity and diabetes have become an overwhelming epidemic worldwide. Refined sugars in most all of our food supply, coupled with sugary soft drinks and fruit drinks have created havoc in our bodies with chronically high blood sugar, weight gain, heart disease, infections, kidney and eye disease and more. Raw garlic has actually been shown to modulate blood sugar, reduce the damage it has on our bodies, and reverse the inflammation and oxidative stress. Garlic improves insulin sensitivity so that blood sugar stays in check better.

4. Prevents Heart Disease and Blood Clots

Many physicians still prescribe dangerous statins to reduce cholesterol, unfortunately, statins have had some pretty awful side effects like increasing your chances of getting type 2 diabetes, liver damage, cancer, neurodegeneration, and weakening your muscles (including your heart). If you can take a natural approach to lowering your LDL cholesterol, you should be way better off. LDL numbers can improve with a combination of lower carb/low sugar diet, exercise and garlic. Garlic can regulate cholesterol, lower blood pressure, lower inflammation levels, and prevent arterial plaque buildup, and help prevent heart disease.

One of the biggest contributing factors to heart disease is blood clots. Blood clots move along arteries until there is a narrow spot, and then get stuck, blocking off blood flow and oxygen—this creates either a heart attack, or stroke. Certain people, based on a variety of factors, including diet, are more likely to have blood clots, but garlic helps to thin the blood in a healthy way. Aspirin has been recommended by the medical establishment as a preventative measure against blood clots, but has recently been rescinded by the Food and Drug Administration. When it comes to anticoagulants, allicin from garlic tops the list.

Another risk factor in heart attacks and strokes is high blood pressure. Often the drugs used to control blood pressure have many adverse side effects, including impotency, making them undesirable. In the *Journal of Pharmaceutical Science*, study results showed garlic to work better than atenolol, a popular beta-blocker hypertension medication.

5. Prevents Lung Cancer

Garlic breath may be tough to tolerate, but that is one of the ways it supports your lung tissue. The powerful compounds in garlic are very valuable for lung health. This study showed that eating raw garlic twice a week or more, reduces the risk of lung cancer by a whopping 44% ! Allicin also helps ease congestion and irritation in the lungs and helps fight pneumonia.

6. Supports Healthy Pancreas and Insulin Production

Our pancreas helps to produce insulin, which in turn lowers blood sugar. However, in light of the sugar and carb-heavy diets that most people eat today, the pancreas is working overtime

to produce insulin in high enough amounts to counteract glucose levels. Over time, the pancreas can become exhausted and quit functioning properly or producing insulin. This is diabetes. Allicin from garlic actually helps to repair the pancreas and allow it to better produce necessary insulin. It works for type 1 as well as type 2 diabetes.

7. Garlic Attracts Women!

While scientists have observed that many animals are more attracted to males who eat a high nutrient, high antioxidant diet—for example blue footed boobys (a bird in the Galapagos) attract mates by the bright blue of their feet—which comes from the antioxidants in their diet. A similar thing may be true in humans, although we don't look for blue feet, we look for scents and skin colors.