

7 Health Benefits of Elderberry



Elderberry: Safe, Natural, and Powerful



Are you looking for a safe, natural medicine to use this cold and flu season? Elderberry won't disappoint. It's been used throughout human history, even being planted at the edges of gardens to act as a guardian over the other plants. And just as the Elder Mother looked after her little ones in the garden, she can help to look after you and your little ones, too.

Seven Health Benefits of Elderberry
Antimicrobial Action



Elderberry is a traditional remedy for colds, flus, and other infections. Modern research is validating what herbalists have long known. Whether you're dealing with a bacterium or a virus, elderberry can help due to its antimicrobial and immune-stimulating properties. But The Elder Mother is especially helpful when it comes to the flu. In laboratory tests, elderberry flavonoids were comparable to commercial antivirals like Tamiflu. Researchers suspect that elderberry does this by binding to viruses, preventing them from infecting your cells.

Anti-Inflammatory Power

Chronic inflammation could be the source of much discomfort and dis-ease. Elderberries contain strong antioxidants and anti-inflammatory power to help relieve rheumatism and other inflammation-linked conditions.

Cancer Fighter

Yes, elderberries are a potent cancer fighter, as well. Researchers have suggested that elderberries may become a part of future treatment protocols for advanced tumors. They have also shown promise as a topical treatment for skin cancers. This might be due to their strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.



Cardiovascular Health

Elderberries have the ability to influence cholesterol levels and heart health. This could be another benefit of their anti-inflammatory power and antioxidant abilities. But researchers also suggest that elderberries have the ability to influence how the genes in our liver cells express themselves, resulting in more efficient cholesterol processing.

Diabetes Management

Elderflower and elderberry both help to lower blood glucose. In animal tests, elderberry was shown to reduce serum insulin and liver cholesterol levels.

Not to be confused with pokeweed, elderberries grow in spray formations.



Diuretic Action

Herbalists use diuretics to flush excess water from the body. This can be done for many reasons, but the idea is usually to flush out toxins or infectious agents along with the water. Though relatively few studies have examined the efficacy of this practice, those that are available seem to support the traditional use of elderberry as a diuretic.

Wound Healing

In addition to all of the benefits listed above—or maybe because of them—elderberry leaves have also been shown to have powerful wound-healing properties. In one study, an herbal paste of several herbs, including elderberry, was confirmed to speed the healing of a bone fracture. In both of these examples, the leaves were used topically. Do not use elderberry leaves internally.

So Many Fun Options!



Elderberry syrup is a favored vehicle for the health benefits of elderberry.

Elderberry medicines can be purchased or created in a variety of different forms. Elder products include teas, syrups, wines, lozenges and pills, juices, sprays, powders, tinctures, kombuchas, soda, gummies, and nearly anything else you can imagine. You can even make your own elderberry ice cream. While elderberry syrup is probably the most-used form of elderberry medicine, any of these would be acceptable and useful. Use whichever one calls to you.

Both the flowers and the berries can be used in medicines. The flowers are gentler. For this reason, many people like to use flower-based products with children.



Are Elderberries Safe?

Elderberry plants have a chemical that breaks down into cyanide in the human body. But not all parts of the plant are dangerous. The flowers are totally safe, either in herbal concoctions or eaten straight off the plant. The berries are a little different. Ripe berries do contain a small amount of cyanide-forming chemical in their seeds. The amount is small enough that the berries are not considered toxic. However, children, or people who are extra-sensitive to this chemical, should not eat raw berries. Eating too many raw berries can cause stomach upset, vomiting, and diarrhea. You should avoid the unripe berries entirely.

Cooking or drying the ripe berries neutralizes this chemical, making the berries safe to eat. Cooking also improves the flavor and makes the berry's nutrients easier to digest and absorb. Commercially prepared products are usually safe, as well.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, you should talk to a trusted medical provider before consuming elderberry products. Do the same before giving them to young children. People who have or have had autoimmune diseases, organ transplants, or other immune-system complications should also consult with a medical provider before using elderberries, due to their immune-stimulating properties. If you are taking any medication with the same properties as elderberries, you should consult with a medical professional, as well. (These could include diuretics, medications for diabetes, laxatives, medications that affect the immune system, and others.)

Despite those scary-sounding warnings, elderberries are generally well-tolerated and well-loved by those who use them. You can buy elderberry medicines online or at a health-food store, but they feel a little more magical when you make them yourself.

If you'd like to make elderberry syrup and a whole lot more, you can take the leap and become a medicine man or medicine woman. Whatever you choose to do, listen to your body, listen to the plants, and may The Elder Mother guard you as one of her own.

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