

This Popular Kitchen Staple May Do More Than You Think

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Apple cider vinegar (ACV) supports digestion, blood sugar balance, and satiety by slowing gastric emptying and stabilizing your energy after meals
- › Just 1 tablespoon daily, diluted in water, helped participants lose weight, shrink waistlines, and eliminate digestive symptoms in under 30 days, according to a study
- › ACV's active compound, acetic acid, improves insulin sensitivity and reduces fat formation by helping the body burn glucose more efficiently and store less fat after meals
- › ACV also works topically and around the home. Use it to treat dandruff, reduce nasal congestion, sanitize toothbrushes, and soothe bloating, acid reflux, or minor infections
- › Consuming undiluted vinegar can damage your teeth and esophagus, and combining it with medications like insulin or diuretics can dangerously lower potassium levels – here are some tips to help you use ACV safely

Apple cider vinegar (ACV) has been used for centuries as a household remedy to preserve food, treat wounds, and support digestion. Today, it has resurfaced as a modern health tool, touted for everything from blood sugar support to metabolic improvement. And unlike other trendy "wellness hacks," this food's unique history is backed by a growing body of research that makes it more than just folk medicine.

Understanding how ACV works inside your body and knowing how to use it properly without triggering unpleasant side effects are essential for you to maximize the advantages of this valuable liquid. Unfortunately, this is where many people fall short. By

knowing the correct dosage, timing, and interactions, ACV becomes a safe, simple, and effective remedy you can integrate into your daily routine.

What Is Apple Cider Vinegar (and Why Does It Offer So Many Health Benefits?)

The use of vinegar goes back thousands of years, around 5,000 BC;¹ there are even ancient Egyptian urns dating back to 3,000 BC with vinegar residues inside. Hippocrates, regarded as the Father of Medicine, was even said to use ACV to heal and disinfect wounds back in the 5th century.²

- **Apple cider vinegar is made by fermenting apples using yeast and sugar** – The process is similar to that of other homemade fermented brews, such as kombucha.³ Read a detailed explanation of how ACV is made in this article: "[What Can Apple Cider Vinegar Do for You?](#)"
- **Apple cider vinegar's composition** – ACV is mostly water, almost 94% to be exact. It also contains small amounts of minerals like calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc, sodium, potassium, and natural sugar.
- **Acetic acid is the primary beneficial component** – It comprises 5% to 6% of the vinegar, and is believed to be responsible for the majority of its benefits. Acetic acid acts as an antimicrobial agent and weight management aid.⁴
- **ACV also contains antioxidants, phenolic compounds, and probiotics** – These components are responsible for its antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and gut-supporting effects.
- **When you buy ACV, you'll likely come across two types** – These are "filtered and pasteurized," or "raw and unfiltered." Raw ACV contains the "mother," a cloudy sediment that forms at the bottom of the bottle.

This mass of bacteria forms during fermentation and provides multiple health benefits, as it contains healthy probiotics, enzymes, and nutrients. Hence, I recommend choosing organic, unfiltered, and unpasteurized ACV to ensure you're getting the healthiest product.⁵

- **You'll reap myriad benefits, from better digestion to clearer skin** — While ACV has been widely revered for its tangy flavor, it's also celebrated for its versatility. Very Well Health lists some of the notable health effects of ACV, such as weight management, digestion support, blood sugar regulation, heart health management, skin benefits, and antibacterial effects.⁶
- **ACV is best incorporated as part of a balanced diet, not as a standalone remedy** — This is why it's crucial to understand both the advantages and the safe practices of ACV consumption. I'll provide useful guidelines on this later, but first, let's discuss some of the benefits this product offers.

ACV Provides Blood-Sugar Lowering Benefits for Diabetics

One of [the most standout benefits of ACV](#) is its ability to balance your blood sugar levels, making it highly useful for diabetics. With diabetes rates expected to increase in every country in the world, knowing that there are simple solutions that will help manage or even protect against this disease is essential.

- **Diabetes is among the top 10 leading causes of death and disability** — In 2021, there were 529 million people diagnosed with diabetes; according to reports, [this number is expected to double by 2050](#), meaning that 1.31 billion people globally will develop this disease.^{7,8}
- **ACV helps reduce Type 2 diabetes markers** — According to a 2023 study published in the *Frontiers in Clinical Diabetes and Healthcare*, Type 2 diabetics who incorporated ACV into their daily diet had significant reductions in HbA1c, fasting

blood sugar, cholesterol, and triglycerides. Reducing these lipid levels contributes to better cardiovascular health, meaning they're getting a dual benefit from this pantry staple. According to the researchers:⁹

"The results of our study showed a significant decrease in FBG, HbA1C, total cholesterol, LDL, LDL/HDL ratio, cholesterol/HDL ratio, and an increase in insulin hormone in ACV group. In addition, we observed an increasing tendency in HDL levels ... It seems that consuming ACV as a functional food along with medications can reduce cardiovascular disease risk factors in diabetic patients."

- **Acetic acid slows down the process of gastric emptying** – It prevents rapid spikes in blood glucose levels after meals. These properties make ACV valuable for managing diabetes, so those affected could avoid relying on just conventional medications to control their blood sugar levels.
- **Studies also confirm ACV's effects against diabetes** – For example, a 2025 systematic review published in the journal *Frontiers in Nutrition* highlighted the effects of ACV on glycemic control and insulin sensitivity. Based on their analysis of seven studies, the researchers found that consuming 1 ml of ACV per day led to a -1.255 mg/dL reduction in fasting blood sugar.¹⁰

ACV Supports Your Weight Loss Goals

Beyond blood sugar regulation, [apple cider vinegar](#) is associated with modest weight loss and improved satiety. When you consume it with meals, it enhances metabolism and fat oxidation, thereby supporting your weight management efforts.

- **ACV makes you feel fuller and reduces overeating** – According to studies,^{11,12} incorporating apple cider vinegar (ACV) into your daily meals improves feelings of fullness. A 2019 study published in the *Nutrients* journal also found that when participants consumed ACV along with their meals, they experienced a noticeable reduction in hunger.¹³

- **A study gives more proof of this effect** – The study, published in the Asian Food Science Journal, investigated how a 30-day course of ACV effervescent tablets affected overweight and obese adults. The study included 45 adults aged 18 to 60 years with a body mass index (BMI) of 25 or higher.¹⁴
- **The results showed measurable changes across nearly every tracked variable** – The participants reduced their waist size by 1.13 cm, lost 1.46 kilograms (just over 3 pounds), and lowered their BMI by 0.58 points. Even hip circumference dropped by an average of 1.07 cm.¹⁵
- **Aside from delaying gastric emptying, acetic acid reduces lipogenesis** – This is the process by which your body turns carbs into fat. It also supports better glucose utilization and suppresses the production of enzymes that store fat.
- **ACV helps regulate your appetite** – It promotes a sense of satiety, suppressing your urge to snack on unhealthy foods in between mealtimes. By helping regulate your hunger signals, you become more mindful of your food intake, allowing you to stick to a balanced and calorie-controlled diet.¹⁶

Taking 1 Tablespoon of ACV a Day Already Makes a Measurable Difference

One mistake many people make when it comes to apple cider vinegar is using too much too quickly. It's easy to overdo ACV, especially if you take it undiluted, so remember these tips when ingesting apple cider vinegar.¹⁷

- **Ideally, keep your consumption to 1 tablespoon (15 ml) per day** – According to an article in Very Well Health, this is the most effective dosage across multiple studies.¹⁸
- **Keep in mind that ACV is highly acidic** – The acetic acid in ACV is highly corrosive, so if you consume it undiluted every day, it will erode your tooth enamel, irritate your esophagus, and damage your stomach lining.

- **The solution? Dilute it in water** — Mixing it in a full glass (around 8 ounces) of water will do the trick. You can also add it to your tea or fruit juices. One way to keep it from harming your teeth is to use a straw when drinking the tonic; this minimizes direct contact with the surface of your teeth.

Another idea is to use ACV as part of a meal, like in a salad dressing or dipping sauce. However, I do not recommend cooking or heating it, as this will damage the acetic acid. As much as possible, use it raw.

- **Drinking this tonic before or during meals provides a range of benefits** — You'll feel less bloated, your appetite will be reduced, and you'll have more stable energy throughout the day. This is because ACV helps blunt the blood sugar spikes that usually follow carbohydrate-heavy meals, which is important even if you don't have diabetes.
- **Remember to start small** — If this is your first time to use ACV, taking it in small dosages is highly recommended. Make sure to monitor how your body responds.
- **ACV interacts with medications** — If you're taking any meds with ACV, be aware that it could alter the effects of these drugs. For example, when taken with diuretics or digoxin, a heart medication, it negatively impacts your potassium levels.

If you're drinking ACV daily and start feeling dizzy, nauseous, or fatigued, especially during workouts or hot weather, there's a good chance your potassium is off. Make sure to rehydrate and have your potassium levels checked.

What Else Is Apple Cider Vinegar Good For?

Aside from ingesting ACV, you can also apply it topically or use it around your home. This is because it has antimicrobial and antifungal properties, making it a versatile addition to your homemade disinfectants and sanitizers. One study notes that it helps

eliminate pathogenic organisms like *Candida albicans*, *E. coli*, and *Staphylococcus aureus* that trigger infections.¹⁹ To help put your bottle of ACV to good use, here are some ideas for you to try:

- **Use it as a facial toner** – The acidity in ACV helps maintain the skin's natural pH balance, creating an environment that discourages the growth of unwanted microbes. This balance is crucial for preventing skin infections and promoting overall skin health.²⁰
- **Make a hair rinse to treat dandruff** – Add two tablespoons of ACV to a cup of water, then pour it over your hair after shampooing. Rinse it out after five minutes. ACV can dry and irritate your scalp, though, so use it sparingly or try a weaker dilution.²¹
- **Disinfect your toothbrush (and even your dentures)** – Make a mixture of one-half cup of water, 2 tablespoons ACV and 2 teaspoons of baking soda. Use this to soak your toothbrush or dentures for a few minutes.
- **Get rid of bad breath** – Add 1 to 2 tablespoons of ACV to an 8-ounce glass of water and use it as a mouthwash after brushing. Make sure to rinse with plain water after gargling to remove any remaining acid from your teeth and avoid damaging your tooth enamel.²²
- **Get rid of hiccups** – The sharp, tangy taste of ACV helps ease hiccups. Take 1 teaspoon of apple cider vinegar alone or mix it with 6 to 8 ounces of filtered water and drink it down quickly.
- **Ease an upset stomach** – Drinking a glass of water with a small amount of ACV added to it will promote proper digestion and aid in the breakdown of foods. The acidic nature of ACV will also replenish low acid levels in your stomach, maintaining its proper pH. It also relieves gas and bloating and soothes intestinal spasms.²³
- **Calm acid reflux** – Contrary to what you may believe, heartburn is often caused by too little, not too much, stomach acid. Try sipping a glass of warm water with a teaspoon of apple cider vinegar 30 minutes before your lunch or dinner. This will

provide your stomach with sufficient amounts of acid to promote proper digestion.

- **Clear nasal congestion** – Apple cider vinegar is well-known for reducing congestion and thinning mucus, which promotes drainage and allows your body to expel bacteria and other infection-causing germs.

You can either sip a tonic made with ACV and water or make a nasal rinse solution by combining one-half to 1 teaspoon of apple cider vinegar with 6 to 8 ounces of warm filtered water (do not use tap water). Stir well and introduce the liquid into your sinuses once or twice daily using a neti pot or sinus rinse bottle until your condition improves.

- **Soothe a sore throat** – ACV cannot cure a sore throat, but it will help ease inflammation, shorten its duration, and speed up your recovery. Gargle with a solution of warm water and ACV at the first signs of sore throat.
- **Ease restless legs** – Painful leg cramps could be a sign your body is either not metabolizing minerals such as calcium, magnesium, or potassium well or is losing certain minerals due to a pH imbalance. Drinking apple cider vinegar will help regulate your body's pH, allowing it to effectively metabolize and distribute vital minerals.
- **Add it to your savory soups for brightness and added flavor** – Adding a small amount of ACV to bone broth can also help extract the nutrients from the bones, resulting in a healthier broth.
- **Kill weeds** – Use it to eliminate weeds growing in your sidewalk or driveway.

One final reminder – ACV should not be considered as a treatment for health conditions; rather, make it a part of your balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. When consumed and used properly, alongside a nutritious diet, proper exercise, and stress management strategies, apple cider vinegar will provide comprehensive support for your overall health.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Apple Cider Vinegar

Q: How much apple cider vinegar should I take each day?

A: One tablespoon (15 ml) of ACV diluted in at least 8 ounces of water per day is enough to support blood sugar balance, digestion, and satiety without causing harm. More than two tablespoons daily is not recommended.

Q: When is the best time to take apple cider vinegar?

A: The most effective time to take ACV is just before or during meals. This timing helps slow down gastric emptying, which keeps blood sugar steady, improves digestion, and reduces post-meal bloating and cravings.

Q: Can apple cider vinegar help with weight loss?

A: Yes. In a 30-day study, overweight participants who used ACV effervescent tablets saw reductions in body weight, waist size, and appetite without needing intense dietary changes. ACV supports fullness and fat metabolism.

Q: Is it safe to take apple cider vinegar every day?

A: It's safe if used correctly – diluted and limited to 1 to 2 tablespoons daily. Drinking it undiluted or combining it with certain medications like insulin, diuretics, or digoxin can cause serious side effects, especially by lowering potassium levels too much.

Q: What are other ways to use apple cider vinegar beyond drinking it?

A: ACV can be used topically as a skin toner, hair rinse, or sore throat gargle. It's also effective as a mouthwash, nasal rinse, and household disinfectant due to its antifungal and antibacterial properties.

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