

Prevention Magazine Survey Finds Aloe #1 Herbal Home Remedy

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In a recent national survey conducted by Prevention Magazine among 5,000 of its readers, 97% of the respondents found Aloe vera to be the “most used” and “most popular” herbal remedy, getting top marks for its ability to soothe and heal minor burns.

Readers were asked to rate their personal experiences with home remedies, using such natural products as cranberry juice, garlic, comfrey, chamomile and Aloe. Aloe won conclusively.

The results were not surprising to Varro Tyler, Ph.D., a professor of pharmacology at Purdue University, and an advisor to Prevention. According to Dr. Tyler, “Evidence seems to indicate that something in Aloe vera inhibits the action of bradykinin, a peptide that produces pain in injuries like burns. It also inhibits the body’s production of thromboxanes, chemicals detrimental to wound healing.”

Many of those responding to the survey were quite specific in their reports. A Staten Islander said that he used Aloe directly from the plant on a leg that had been burned on a hot pipe. “It was the only way to keep the pain away,” he said, “It healed beautifully, and left no scar.”

Many readers reported that they kept an Aloe plant in the kitchen, to be used on minor burns, or cuts and scrapes. Others said that they took their plants or a few leaves with them when they went on vacation trips in case something happened. And a Home Economics teacher in Bangor, Maine, keeps several plants in her classroom. “Burns are common in my class,” she wrote, “And fresh Aloe is the best answer I’ve found.”

In a Prevention issue that preceded the questionnaire, Dr. Tyler wrote an article entitled “The Top 7 Herbs for Health” in which he listed Aloe as one of the herbs most used. He wrote, “In a remarkable new study, Aloe aided 18 people who had facial dermabrasion (sanding away scars). Researchers applied the usual wound dressing on one side of each face, the same dressing soaked in Aloe gel on the other. Aloe’s advantages: less swelling after two days, less crusting by day four and 90% skin regrowth by day six, compared to only 40% to 50% on the Aloe-free side. And Aloe appeared to reduce throbbing, although it stung when applied. The researchers calculate that Aloe speeded up overall wound healing time by three days.” *Journal of Dermatological Surgery and Oncology*, May, 1990)

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