

# Nutritionally Speaking

by George E. Meinig, DDS



## Aloe Vera- for many years it has had many uses

**DEAR READERS:** Along the way, after writing the following article, I somehow misplaced the letter containing the question. It was signed R.N. and asked about the Aloe plant and its medicinal qualities. The question had a particular request as to the use of Aloe in gall-bladder trouble and whether or not there were any known side effects from prolonged use of the Aloe Vera Gel.

My apologies to R.N. and our readers for not having the actual question.

**DEAR R.N.:** Aloe Vera is known by many laymen as the burn plant, first-aid plant, medicine plant, or miracle plant. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved its use in minor first-aid situations but has not done so for medical ailments. However, because of its long history of over 4,000 years of use, it is used for countless numbers of body afflictions.

Most species of this plant are originally natives of South Africa. It was recorded as a popular trade item in Ancient Rome and Greece. Aloe Vera is usually pronounced 'a'-low veer' a,' but the correct pronunciation of the genus name is 'ah-low-ee vee-rah.'

The author of the famed Greek Herbal, Dioscorides, during the first century A.D., reported on its use for wounds, insomnia, stomach disorders, constipation, hemorrhoids, itching, headache, loss of hair, mouth and gum diseases, kidney ailments,

### *It's useful for burns*

blistering, skin care, sunburn, blemishes, etc. Many firms are now distributing numerous aloe-vera products. They report all these very same conditions are helped by the use of this herb and have added at least that many additional ailments that benefit from its use.

**STRANGELY,** my rather large file of data on this plant doesn't mention its use for gall bladder trouble. Several writers claim there are no side effects from its use. Keep in mind that these statements have not been made as a result of scientific testing methods that could disclose more accurately the true nature of its chemical activity in the body. Anyone that uses the product internally by mouth over long periods on a regular daily basis should pay close attention to any signs or symptoms that might occur. Unfortunately, most individuals are not too observant of metabolic, day-to-day differences that may arise.

I am not implying that I know of any problems but it is so easy to be carried away with enthusiasm when a substance has so many successful attributes. It will interest you to know that I have grown the plant at home and at my office and have used the gel from its cut leaf to heal burns and poison oak. In my opinion it has a slight edge over vitamin E cream or oil for burns.

Aloe Vera plants are readily available from nursery and garden stores. For those not familiar with this plant, it appears much like a member of the cactus family but it is really of the lily family. The lance-shaped leaves are quite thick and heavy. To obtain its medicinal ingredients the leaf is broken off at the base and the skin slit-up the length, exposing the gel. It is this gel that contains the healing characteristics. The manner in which the plant heals itself is a wonder to behold. A leaf cut across in but a few minutes will form a rubber-like coating over the wound and in a short time the leaf will be healed completely.

It is felt that enzymes within the gel along with its other ingredients contribute to its properties that are antibiotic. It is found to be astringent, coagulating, pain-inhibiting and growth-stimulating. Readers that would like more information about this most interesting plant should write to the Aloe Vera Research Institute, 5103 Sequoia, Cypress, CA 90630.

**DEAR DR. MEINIG:** Please tell me something about Pantothenic Acid. I heard it was good for you. What does it do? C.A.

**DEAR C.A.:** Pantothenic Acid is one of the B vitamins. It is needed and used by every cell in our bodies. Deficiencies cause exhaustion of the adrenal gland. This results in a reduced ability to handle stress as the adrenal makes over 40 hormones needed by our system, including cortisone.

Stress itself, along with illnesses increases body requirements for this important vitamin, and the ill effects of the release of histamine during an allergy attack is often controlled with its use.

Some strains of experimental rats develop shorter limbs when fed a diet low in pantothenic acid. People who have vitiligo (white and/or heavily tanned spots on different parts of their skin) are often helped by taking supplements of pantothenic acid or

Pantothenate, a sister product. Individuals who have burning feet report this vitamin stops the problem.

**BRITTLE DIABETICS,** who easily go into insulin shock, find pantothenic acid lessens the tendency. Production of digestive acid in the stomach is said to be associated with this vitamin.

Dizziness, low blood pressure, muscle weakness, extreme fatigue, stomach distress, constipation, impaired coordin-

### *Don't drink booze or coffee*

ation, quick temper, muscle cramps, kidney trouble, premature aging, and ulcers are additional symptoms that result from a pantothenic acid deficiency.

It should be apparent that pantothenic acid is involved with numbers of the body's major systems: digestive organs, skin and its appendages, nerves, endocrine glands and the metabolism involved with fats, proteins and carbohydrates. It is difficult to believe all these many different symptoms people suffer could be related to one vitamin. Improvement in eating habits would do much

to eliminate these degenerative deficiencies.

**ALCOHOL AND COFFEE** have a detrimental effect upon pantothenic acid and both should be eliminated by patients having any of the symptoms mentioned above.

The foods that generously supply pantothenic acid are liver, organ meats, salmon, legumes, whole grains, wheat germ, brewer's yeast, mushrooms and raw elderberries.

Everyone has a question about nutrition. Send yours to Dr. George G. Meinig, c/o OVN, Box 277, Ojai, CA 93023.

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