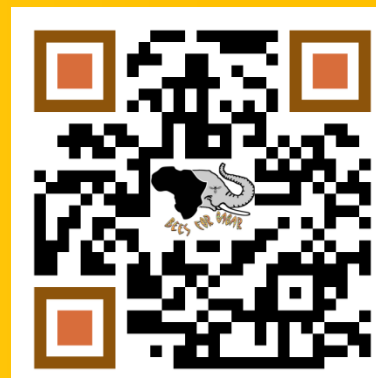


# HONEY FOR HEALTH



**IF A HEALTH WORKER IS NEARBY, ASK THEM BEFORE USING HONEY AS MEDICINE.**



## oral rehydration



Honey is gentler on the stomach than sugar. It is good food for mildly sick people. When someone is sick with vomiting or diarrhea, make this drink to help them get better:  
**HONEY REHYDRATION DRINK**

Use **1 litre** of clean water —mineral water, or water that has been boiled and cooled.

Mix in:

- **2 tablespoons of honey**
- **½ teaspoon of salt**

Give small sips often until the sick person feels better.

## CAUTION!



**NEVER GIVE HONEY TO BABIES! ONLY GIVE HONEY TO CHILDREN AFTER THEIR FIRST BIRTHDAY.**

## nature's medicine



**RAW HONEY HAS NATURAL CHEMICALS THAT FIGHT SICKNESS & PROTECT YOUR BODY.**

**DON'T boil honey— this destroys the good things inside it.**



## vitamins



**HONEY CONTAINS ONLY SMALL AMOUNTS OF NATURAL MINERALS & VITAMINS YOUR BODY NEEDS. IT IS GOOD FOOD, BUT EAT OTHER FOODS TOO.**

## antibiotic



**HONEY HEALS CUTS & SORES. IT FIGHTS INFECTION & HELPS SKIN GROW BACK. PUT CLEAN HONEY ON A WOUND & COVER IT.**

## dressing



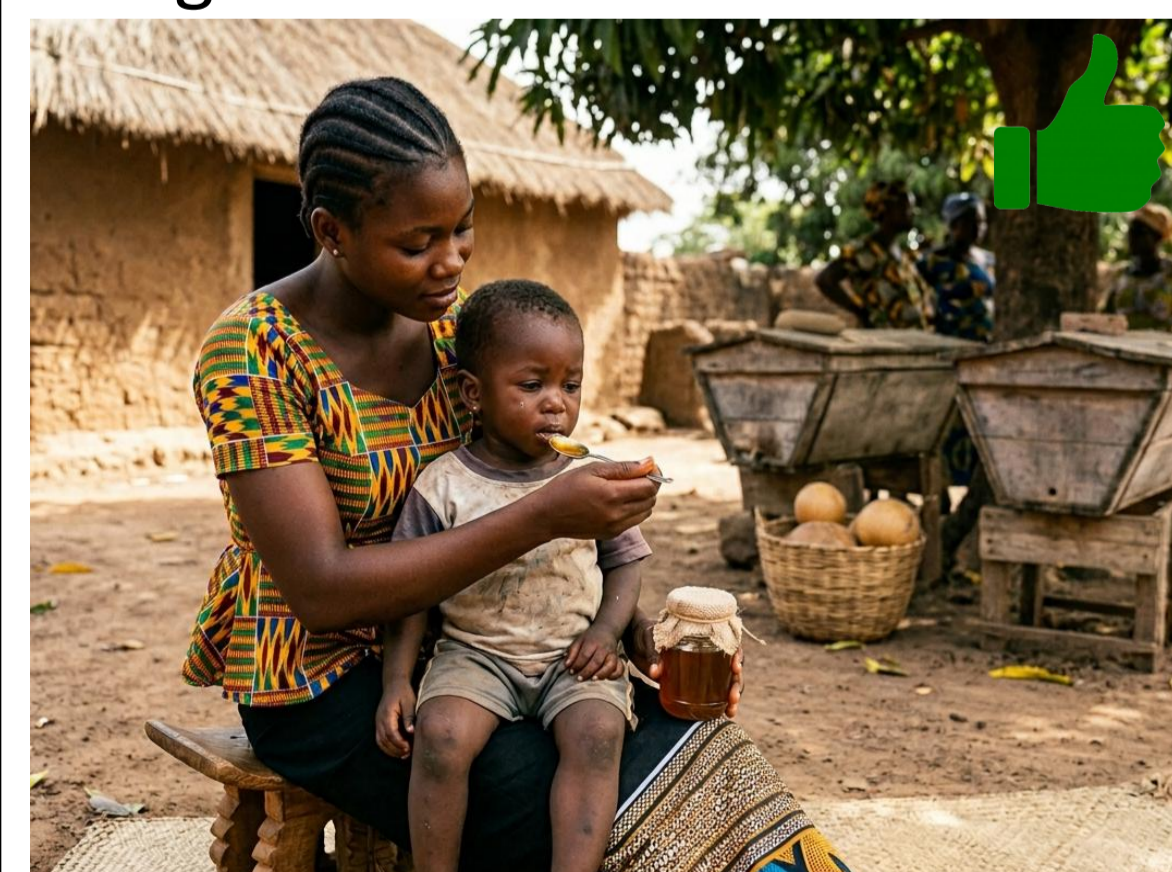
**HONEY HELPS SLOW-HEALING WOUNDS HEAL FASTER-- BUT IF YOU HAVE DIABETIC FOOT SORES OR DEEP WOUNDS YOU MUST GO TO A CLINIC OR SEE A DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY.**

## ointment



**HONEY CAN BE PUT ON MINOR BURNS TO REDUCE PAIN, FIGHT INFECTION, & HELP THE SKIN HEAL. USE CLEAN HONEY ON A FRESH BURN & COVER IT GENTLY. SEEK MEDICAL AID FOR DEEP, SERIOUS BURNS.**

## cough medicine



**WHEN A CHILD (OLDER THAN ONE YEAR) HAS A COUGH OR COLD, GIVE THEM A SMALL SPOON OF HONEY. HONEY WORKS AS WELL AS MANY COUGH MEDICINES & IS SAFE & NATURAL.**

## sleep aid



**HONEY HELPS CHILDREN (OLDER THAN ONE YEAR) SLEEP BETTER WHEN THEY ARE SICK WITH A COUGH OR WHEN THEY ARE RUNNING DIARRHEA.**

## gut protection



**HONEY CAN HELP WITH STOMACH PROBLEMS, SKIN PROBLEMS, & CHEST INFECTIONS. MANY STUDIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD SUPPORT WHAT TRADITIONAL HEALERS HAVE LONG KNOWN.**

## energy source



**HONEY GIVES YOU QUICK ENERGY. THE NATURAL SUGARS GO STRAIGHT INTO YOUR BLOOD. EAT HONEY BEFORE HARD WORK OR SPORT OR WHEN YOU FEEL WEAK.**

## food & medicine



**HONEY IS MEDICINE & FOOD IN ONE. IT IS MADE LOCALLY, COSTS LITTLE, & CAN TREAT MANY COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS IN YOUR COMMUNITY.**

**REHYDRATION DRINK**  
(for treating vomiting  
or diarrhea)



- 1 L of clean water
- mix in two tablespoons of honey  
and
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt

Honey is easier to digest than table sugar and can be of benefit in feeding people with intestinal distress or stomach disorders. If someone is sick and losing a lot of fluids from vomiting or diarrhea you can use honey to make a REHYDRATION DRINK. Use 1 litre of clean water —mineral water, or water that has been boiled and cooled.

Mix in:

- 2 tablespoons of honey
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of salt

Give small sips often until the sick person feels better.

**NEVER GIVE HONEY TO BABIES! ONLY GIVE HONEY TO CHILDREN OLDER THAN ONE YEAR.**

Raw honey — including the honey the cooperatives produce— naturally contains dormant bacterial spores called *Clostridium botulinum*. These spores are harmless to older children and adults because a mature digestive system destroys them before they can cause harm. In babies under one year old, the digestive system is not yet fully developed. If a baby swallows honey, these spores can survive in the infant's gut and begin producing a powerful toxin. This causes a serious illness called infant botulism. The baby's muscles become weak — including the muscles needed to breathe. Without medical treatment, infant botulism can be fatal. This is not a risk from bad or spoiled honey. It is a risk from all honey, including honey that looks clean, smells good, and is safe for everyone else in the family. Heating or boiling honey does not destroy the spores. The rule is absolute: **NO honey for any child under one year old, for any reason** — not as food, not as medicine, not as a treatment for cough or diarrhea, not rubbed on a pacifier or finger to soothe a baby. Older children and adults can eat honey freely and safely.



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This is the most important safety message on the entire poster. Honey is safe and beneficial for everyone except babies under one year old. For infants, honey can cause a rare but potentially fatal illness called infant botulism, and this warning must be clearly understood by every person who uses this poster.

Raw honey — including the honey this cooperative produces — naturally contains dormant spores of a bacterium called *Clostridium botulinum*. In older children and adults, the digestive system is mature enough to destroy these spores before they cause any harm. In babies under one year old, the gut is not yet fully developed. The spores can survive, become active, and produce a toxin that causes muscle weakness — including weakness of the muscles needed to breathe. Without hospital treatment, infant botulism can be fatal.

This is not a risk from bad or spoiled honey. It applies to all honey, including honey that looks clean and smells good. Heating or boiling honey does not destroy the spores.

The rule is simple and absolute: never give honey to a baby before their first birthday — not as food, not as medicine, not for cough, not in a rehydration drink, not on a finger to soothe them. After the first birthday, honey is safe.

Harris, R. A., & Dabritz, H. A. (2024). Infant botulism: In search of *Clostridium botulinum* spores. *Current Microbiology*, 81(10), 306. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00284-024-03828-0>  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11322261/>

Arnon, S. S., Midura, T. F., Damus, K., Thompson, B., Wood, R. M., & Chin, J. (1979). Honey and other environmental risk factors for infant botulism. *Journal of Pediatrics*, 94(2), 331–336. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-3476\(79\)80863-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-3476(79)80863-X)  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/368301/>



## NATURE'S MEDICINE

Raw honey contains natural compounds called antioxidants — specifically flavonoids and polyphenols — that protect the body's cells from damage, reduce inflammation, and help fight infection. These are the same biological actions that many pharmaceutical medicines aim to achieve. Peer-reviewed research involving hundreds of studies confirms that these compounds are real and measurable.

The key word is raw. When honey is boiled or added to very hot food or drink, heat destroys these beneficial compounds. The honey may still taste the same, but much of its medicinal value is gone. Always add honey after food or drink has cooled to a comfortable drinking temperature.

The honey this cooperative produces is raw honey, which means it retains its full natural properties. Different honeys have slightly different antioxidant profiles depending on which flowers the bees visited — honey from areas with diverse wild vegetation tends to be particularly rich. This is a genuine quality advantage for locally produced natural honey over processed commercial honey, which is often heated during packaging.

Storing honey correctly preserves its goodness. Keep it in a clean, sealed container away from direct sunlight. Properly stored honey does not spoil — its natural chemistry prevents bacterial growth. A sealed jar of good honey is both a food store and a medicine cabinet that costs nothing extra to maintain.

Ajibola, A., Chamunorwa, J. P., & Erlwanger, K. H. (2012). Nutraceutical values of natural honey and its contribution to human health and wealth. *Nutrition & Metabolism*, 9, 61.  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/1743-7075-9-61>

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3583289/>

Samarghandian, S., Farkhondeh, T., & Samini, F. (2017). Honey and health: A review of recent clinical research. *Pharmacognosy Research*, 9(2), 121–127.  
<https://doi.org/10.4103/0974-8490.204647>



## VITAMINS

Honey contains B vitamins, vitamin C, iron, calcium, potassium, magnesium, and zinc. These are genuine nutrients that support normal body function. However, the amounts present in a typical serving of honey are small — a spoon or two of honey each day contributes something useful but cannot meet all of a person's daily nutritional needs on its own.

Think of honey as a valuable addition to a varied diet, not a replacement for other foods. Vegetables, grains, beans, fish, eggs, and other local foods must still be eaten regularly alongside honey.

Where honey is particularly useful as a nutritional supplement is as a replacement for refined sugar. When children or adults want something sweet, honey is a better choice than processed sugar because it brings these small amounts of vitamins and minerals with it. Refined sugar brings nothing except calories.

For sick people who have lost their appetite, honey stirred into warm water or soft porridge is a gentle way to get some nutrition and energy into the body when eating full meals is difficult. Most sick people can manage a warm honey drink even when they cannot face solid food.

Honey also contains natural enzymes that help the body digest food more easily. This contributes to its reputation as a food that is gentle on the stomach, and supports its use for people with mild digestive complaints.

### Vitamins and minerals

Barreiros, J., Cepeda, A., Franco, C., Nebot, C., & Vázquez, B. (2024). Analysis of minerals in honey and their nutritional implications. *Food Chemistry*, 460, Article 140456.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodchem.2024.140456>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0889157524007671>



## ANTIBIOTIC

Honey's ability to fight harmful bacteria is one of its best-documented medicinal properties. Laboratory studies confirm it is effective against many bacteria that cause common illness, including *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, *E. coli*, and *Staphylococcus*. This is why honey has been used as a treatment for infections across cultures for thousands of years — and why modern science has confirmed what traditional healers long observed.

Honey fights bacteria in several ways simultaneously. It is naturally acidic, and most harmful bacteria cannot survive in acidic conditions. It contains very little water, which bacteria need to grow. It produces small amounts of hydrogen peroxide — a natural disinfectant — when it comes into contact with moisture. And it contains plant-derived compounds from the flowers the bees visited, many of which have their own antibacterial properties.

Because honey attacks bacteria in so many ways at once, bacteria find it very difficult to develop resistance to it. This is an important advantage over pharmaceutical antibiotics, which bacteria can learn to resist over time. Antibiotic resistance is a serious and growing problem in medicine globally.

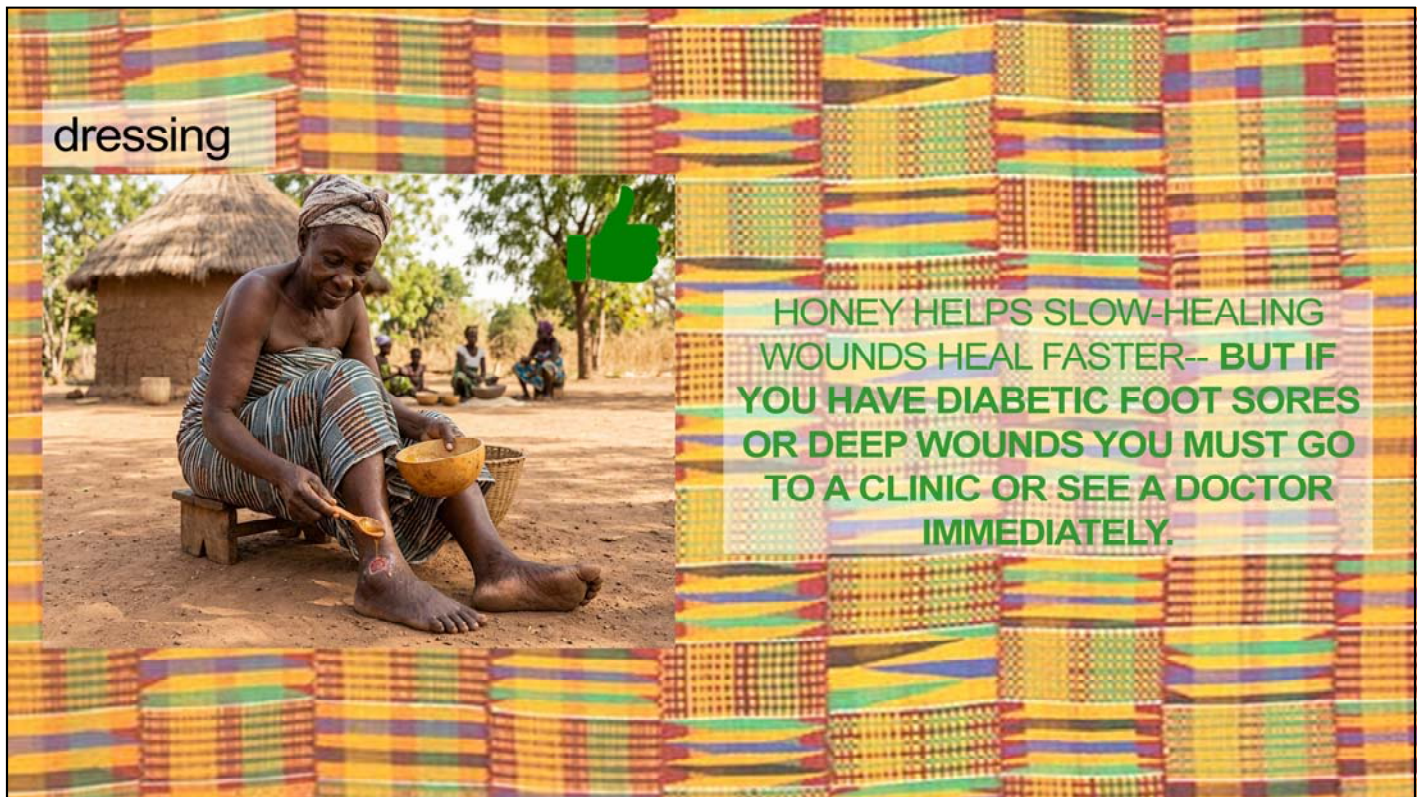
For community use, honey's antibacterial properties are most reliably applied to minor surface cuts, scrapes, and mild sore throats. If a health worker is available, consult them first. For serious infections, deep wounds, or any illness that is getting worse, seek medical care promptly — honey is a useful first response, not a substitute for treatment.

Tashkandi, H. (2021). Honey in wound healing: An updated review. *Open Life Sciences*, 16(1), 1555–1562. <https://doi.org/10.1515/biol-2021-0084>  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8496555/>



Remember, that honey is not a miracle cure for anything. But it does have some real medicinal uses.

It can be used as a **WOUND DRESSING** for cuts and scrapes when antibiotic ointments are not available-- the high sugar content of honey sucks the water out of micro-organisms that can cause infection and stops them from growing. Honey will also feed the damaged cells of the wound. To use: first wash the wound with soap and clean water (preferably boiled water that has been cooled or a good quality bottled water). Then smear a thin coating of honey on the wound just as you would use an ointment. You can mix the honey with a bit of salt for wounds not caused by burns/blisters. Cover the wound with a clean bandage. Repeat cleaning , honeying and covering each day until the wound is healed.



## DRESSING

Applying honey to minor wounds is one of the oldest and best-supported medicinal uses of honey. Research confirms that honey promotes healing, reduces infection, and helps new skin grow back. A 2024 review of eight clinical studies involving over 900 patients found that honey dressings significantly reduced healing time compared to standard dressings.

For minor cuts and surface scrapes in otherwise healthy people, raw community honey is a safe and practical first response where pharmaceutical wound dressings are unavailable or unaffordable. Apply clean honey directly to the wound and cover it with a clean cloth.

However, there is a critical safety boundary that must be clearly understood. Raw community honey is an unsterilised agricultural product. It must not be applied to deep wounds, severe burns, or diabetic foot sores. Deep wounds and severe burns create conditions where bacteria in raw honey can cause serious harm rather than preventing it. Diabetic patients have reduced immune function and are particularly vulnerable.

Medical-grade honey used in hospitals is sterilised by a special process that kills all harmful organisms while preserving honey's healing properties. Community honey has not been through this process.

The simple rule is: raw honey is appropriate for minor, surface-level cuts and scrapes in healthy people. For anything deeper, more severe, or in a person with diabetes — go to a clinic. Do not delay seeking proper care by applying honey first.

Tang, Y., Chen, L., & Ran, X. (2024). Efficacy and safety of honey dressings in the management of chronic wounds: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis. *Nutrients*, 16(15), 2455. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu16152455>  
<https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/16/15/2455>



## OINTMENT

Burns are among the most painful and infection-prone injuries that occur in rural households, often from cooking fires. Honey has been studied specifically for burn wound treatment, and a 2024 systematic review of 38 studies confirmed that it reduces pain, fights infection, and promotes skin healing when applied to burns.

For minor burns — small areas of reddened or blistered skin from brief contact with heat — applying clean honey and covering the area gently with a clean cloth is a reasonable first response. Honey keeps the burn moist, which reduces pain and supports healing, while its antibacterial properties reduce the risk of infection in the damaged skin.

As with wound dressings, there is an important safety boundary. For large burns, deep burns, or burns covering significant areas of the body, honey is not sufficient and the person must be taken to a health facility as quickly as possible. Large burns cause fluid loss, shock, and severe infection risk that honey alone cannot address.

For the small burns that occur regularly in cooking and daily life — a splash of hot water, a brief touch against a pot or fire — clean honey applied promptly and covered cleanly is a practical, low-cost, evidence-based response that can meaningfully improve outcomes in communities where a clinic visit involves significant time and travel. It is not a substitute for medical care when medical care is genuinely needed, but for minor burns it is a legitimate and useful first response.

Ozturk, F., Lozano, A. K., Ndayisenga, C., & Celik Yilmaz, A. (2024). A systematic review of honey's benefits for burn wound treatment. In V. de Alencar Arnaut de Toledo & D. R. Moreira (Eds.), *Health Benefits of Honey and Propolis: Scientific Evidence and Medicinal Uses*. IntechOpen. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.1006843>  
<https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/1199272>



## COUGH MEDICINE

Honey for cough is one of the most thoroughly researched of all its medicinal uses, and the evidence is strong. A systematic review published in *BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine* analysed 14 clinical studies and found that honey outperformed standard care — including common over-the-counter cough medicines — for reducing the frequency and severity of cough in upper respiratory tract infections. The World Health Organization recommends honey as a treatment for childhood cough, and the UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence recommends it as a first-line response ahead of antibiotics.

For children older than one year with a cough or cold, a small spoon of honey — given on its own or stirred into a warm drink — is a safe, natural, and effective response. It soothes the throat, reduces the cough reflex, and has almost no side effects in this age group.

This is a case where traditional practice and modern science are in complete agreement. Honey for cough has been common practice in this region and across West Africa for generations. The research simply confirms what communities already knew.

The one firm age boundary is one year. Children under one year old must not be given honey under any circumstances. For children older than one year, honey is safe. For adults, honey for cough is safe and effective with no age restriction.

If a cough is severe, persistent beyond three weeks, accompanied by difficulty breathing, or combined with high fever, seek medical attention. Honey is appropriate for common coughs and colds, not for serious respiratory illness.

Abuelgasim, H., Albury, C., & Lee, J. (2021). Effectiveness of honey for symptomatic relief in upper respiratory tract infections: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine*, 26(2), 57–64. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjebm-2020-111336>  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32817011/>



## **SLEEP AID**

Sleep is when the body does most of its healing. A sick child who cannot sleep because of coughing is being denied the rest their body needs to recover. Honey addresses this directly.

Multiple clinical trials have shown that honey improves sleep quality in children who are sick with a cough, performing better than both placebo and pharmaceutical cough medicines in head-to-head comparisons. The mechanism is well understood: honey promotes the release of melatonin, which is the body's natural sleep hormone. A small spoon of honey given to a sick child in the evening helps calm the cough and supports the natural onset of sleep.

The sleep aid benefit applies to children older than one year. The same absolute prohibition applies here as everywhere else on this poster — honey must never be given to babies under one year old for any purpose, including to help them sleep.

For mothers and caregivers in this community, this is practically valuable information. When a child is sick and coughing through the night, the whole household loses sleep. The mother loses the rest she needs to continue caring for the family. A spoon of honey at bedtime is a simple, inexpensive, evidence-based response that can meaningfully improve the night for a sick child and everyone around them.

Honey stirred into a small amount of warm water and given before sleep works well. The warmth itself is soothing for a sore throat, and the honey extends and deepens the calming effect.

Kuitunen, I., & Renko, M. (2023). Honey for acute cough in children — a systematic review. *European Journal of Pediatrics*, 182(9), 3949–3956.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00431-023-05066-1>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00431-023-05066-1>



## GUT PROTECTION

The gut — the stomach and intestines — is central to overall health. When the gut is healthy, food is digested well, nutrients are absorbed, and the immune system functions properly. When the gut is disrupted by infection, poor diet, or illness, the whole body suffers.

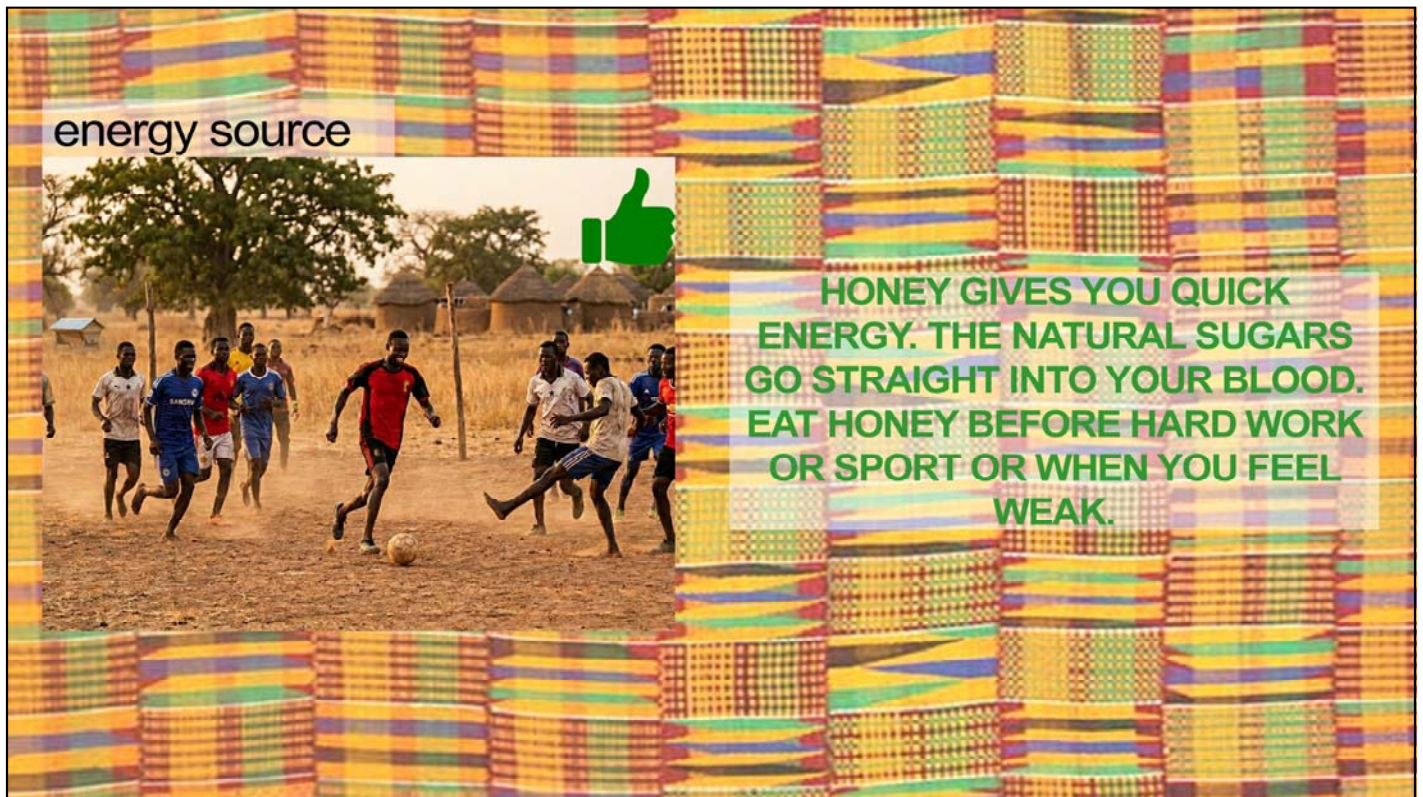
Honey has well-documented benefits for gut health. Its antibacterial properties can help fight gut infections caused by bacteria including *H. pylori* — a bacterium that causes stomach ulcers and is common in many communities. Its antioxidant compounds reduce inflammation in the gut lining. Its enzymes support healthy digestion.

For people with mild stomach complaints — bloating, discomfort, mild cramping, or a generally sensitive stomach — replacing refined sugar with honey in the diet is a practical and evidence-based step. Many people find honey genuinely easier on the stomach than sugar, because honey is partially pre-digested by the bees and its sugars are processed differently by the body.

Honey has also been shown to support the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gut — the good microorganisms that help with digestion and immunity. This is sometimes called a prebiotic effect.

For active diarrhoea, honey should be used as part of the rehydration drink described in the oral rehydration panel — not eaten on its own in large amounts, as too much honey during active diarrhoea can draw more water into the bowel and worsen symptoms. Moderate amounts in the correct rehydration formula are beneficial. Large amounts of straight honey are not.

Koo, T. H., Zakaria, A. D., & Mustafa, M. Z. (2024). Honey clinical applications in complementary medicine: A critical review. *Journal of Pharmacy & Pharmacognosy Research*, 12(6), 1040–1055. [https://doi.org/10.56499/jppres24.1870\\_12.6.1040](https://doi.org/10.56499/jppres24.1870_12.6.1040)  
<https://jppres.com/jppres/honey-clinical-applications-in-complementary-medicine/>



## ENERGY SOURCE

Honey is one of the most efficient natural energy foods available. It is made primarily of two sugars — glucose and fructose — that pass directly into the bloodstream without requiring significant digestion. This means energy from honey is available to the body faster than energy from most other foods.

This makes honey practically valuable in several specific situations. Before hard physical work or farming activity, a spoon of honey gives the body a rapid energy boost that helps sustain effort. During or after strenuous activity, honey helps restore energy quickly. For someone who is weak from illness or has not been eating well, honey in warm water provides fast, accessible energy when the body needs it most.

For children, honey provides clean energy that also comes with the vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants described elsewhere on this poster. It is a far better energy source than processed sugar or commercial sweet drinks, which provide energy with no additional nutritional benefit.

For people doing physically demanding work in hot conditions — which describes most of the agricultural work in this region — staying energised and hydrated is a daily challenge. A small amount of honey in water is a simple, local, and effective response that communities here have practised for generations, and which modern nutritional science fully supports.

The cooperative honey your group produces is a genuine local energy food with real nutritional value. This is worth communicating clearly to buyers and community members who may not think of honey as anything beyond a sweetener.

Foolad, N., Razavinasab, M., Baradaran Rahimi, V., & Askari, V. R. (2025). Dosage exploration of the effects of honey and its derivatives on cardiometabolic outcomes: An overview of systematic reviews and GRADE-assessed updated meta-analysis. *Nutrition & Diabetes*, 15, 3. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41387-025-00403-9>  
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41387-025-00403-9>



## **FOOD & MEDICINE**

Honey is unusual among natural products because it functions as both a high-quality food and a genuine medicine. Most foods provide nutrition but have limited medicinal value. Most medicines treat illness but are not foods. Honey does both, which makes it particularly valuable in communities where healthcare access is limited and food security is a constant concern.

As a food, honey provides fast energy, trace vitamins and minerals, digestive enzymes, and beneficial compounds that support immunity and overall health. As a medicine, it treats coughs, supports wound healing, fights bacterial infections, aids rehydration, and promotes sleep during illness — all backed by peer-reviewed research.

Critically, honey is produced locally by your own cooperative. It does not need to be purchased from a distant supplier, transported over long distances, or stored under special conditions. A sealed jar of honey in a household is immediately available as food when energy is needed and as medicine when illness strikes.

This combination of properties — nutritional value, medicinal effectiveness, local production, low cost, and long shelf life — makes honey genuinely exceptional among the resources available to rural communities in this region.

The work your cooperative does in producing clean, well-harvested, properly processed honey is therefore work that directly benefits community health, not just cooperative income. Every jar of good honey that stays within the community is a resource that can help a family through illness, support a worker through a long day, and give a sick child a better night's sleep. This is worth knowing and worth saying.

Majtan, J. (2024). In vitro testing of honey quality and biological functionality: Underestimated elements in the clinical testing of honey. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 11, 1433786. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2024.1433786>

<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/nutrition/articles/10.3389/fnut.2024.1433786/full>