

6 July 2006

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Benefits from Horseradish

Lately, horseradish is extensively used as a spice for various meals, but we should not forget about all the therapeutic ways in which it can help us maintain our health.

Horseradish is a perennial plant that comes from the same family as mustard and cabbage. It can reach 1,5 meters in height and is mainly cultivated for its root, that is used as a condiment for meat or fish meals. It has been used extensively by our ancestors in medicinal purposes, as Pliny the Elder included it in his Natural History under the name *Amoracia* and also recommended it as a highly efficient herb. Indians used to chew the horseradish root to escape toothaches and it was used as a natural medicine to treat scurvy. Besides antiscorbutic, the root is also expectorant and emetic (helps removing waste from the body when needed.) Besides the root, almost all the constituents of this plant can be used by man in order to release pain or to treat health disorders, as horseradish is very efficient as an herbal plant. Raw leaves of horseradish pressed against the forehead can chase away almost instantly headache, the root cures tonsillitis, while the tea made from horseradish flowers can treat the most serious cold and flu. The spicy root of horseradish can be used as a natural treatment against rheumatic disorders and respiratory disorders, especially the superior respiratory ways. It is so beneficial because it is laden with a high amount of vitamin C and B complex, nutritive minerals (potassium, calcium, iron), natural antibiotics, enzymes etc. The glucosinolates in the root are thought to increase human resistance to cancer. Glucosinolates are plant compounds that occur only in the plants from the mustard family (horseradish, mustard, broccoli, cauliflower etc.) They have powerful antioxidant properties and can also be used to reduce thyroid function and to relieve aching joints. Glucosinolates also act as natural antibiotics against different types of infections because they increase blood flow in the infected area and remove the waste products from that region of the body. Due to its antibiotic properties, horseradish can cure urinary tract infections and kill bacteria in the throat that cause bronchitis, coughs and related problems. Also, a scientific study performed in 2005 showed that glucosinolates increase the liver's ability to detoxify and eliminate carcinogens that may cause the appearance of malignant tumors in this area. But not only do they help prevent tumors, but they proved also to help blocking the growth of already existing tumors. Moreover, horseradish contains an enzyme that helps the breakdown of glucosinolates when eaten by humans, making it easier for us to benefit from its therapeutic powers. Juice or sauce extracted from horseradish root can release sinus infections by dissolving the mucus in the nose. Horseradish sauce works better when mixed with radish leaves and root juice and also carrot juice. Besides sinusitis, it is curative also for hay fever. Other important uses of horseradish relate to diabetes, mild circulatory problems, water retention, digestion, toothaches etc. Nevertheless, people that suffer from peptic ulcer, hyper acid gastritis or hypothyroidism should avoid using horseradish as treatment or condiment for the food, as it is a very powerful remedy that can augment some conditions.