Title: Health Benefits of Apple Cider Vinegar

Subtitle: Corso Information

Second Subtitle: #0 reposted - Apple Cider Vinegar by Alicia McWatters, Ph.D., C.N.C.

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Date: 2009/4/28

URL: http://www.thefocc.com/xoops/modules/article/view.article.php/c6/43

Summary: Apple Cider Vinegar as dietary supplement - there may be something to this!

Apple cider vinegar for dogs? Yes! Apple cider vinegar has many outstanding qualities that are beneficial to pets in general and dogs are no exception.

A little history about vinegar…

Vinegar has been used in one form or another for over 10,000 years. It is used for many purposes and throughout the ages has served as a preservative, condiment, beauty aid, cleaning agent and medicine. The word vinegar comes from the Latin word vinum meaning wine and acer meaning sour. These two words eventually became one and is now vinegre. In 5,000 B.C. the Babylonians fermented the fruit of date palms and created date vinegar. The Romans made vinegar from grapes, figs, dates and rye. The armies of Julius Caesar would drink vinegar and water for its antiseptic properties. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, recommended vinegar for his patients that were ill. Vinegar is mentioned in the Bible a number of times in both the Old and New Testament. Many ancient cultures used vinegar and valued it for its medicinal benefits. It was used for disinfecting wounds and for insect bites and snakebites. Vinegar compresses were useful for healing bruises.

What is ACV and how is it made?

The basis of ACV is sweet apple cider. Sweet apple cider is the juice of the apple. When sweet cider is exposed to air for a few weeks it ferments into alcohol. This is called hard cider. Once the hard cider ferments (again) into acetic acid, it then becomes vinegar. The process is known as acetous fermentation and it occurs in 2 stages. The process begins when yeast (naturally present on the outer skin of apples) converts the sugar in apples to alcohol. When alcohol and air combine, the oxygen in the air interacts with tiny bacteria called vinegar bacillus. This bacillus occurs naturally in the air and coverts the alcohol into acetic acid. The acid content of store-bought ACV is standardized at around 5%.

What are the nutritional benefits of ACV?

Many vitamins, minerals and other nutrients and substances are available in ACV to improve the health of your dog. ACV can provide them with enzymes and important minerals, such as potassium, calcium, magnesium, sulphur, chlorine, phosphorus, iron, silicon and other trace minerals. The vitamins contained in ACV are bioflavonoids (vitamin P), beta-carotene (precursor to vitamin A), vitamin C, E, B1, B2, and B6. Tannins from the crushed cell walls of fresh apples as well as malic acid; tartaric acid, propionic acid, acetic acid and pectin (fibre) are also contained in ACV. Be sure to purchase organic unfiltered, un-pasteurised, naturally fermented ACV for its medicinal features. ACV ranges in colour from a light golden to orange. You’ll know you’ve found the right stuff if you see sediment, referred to as the "mother of vinegar" on the bottom of the bottle. Do NOT buy white distilled vinegar, as it has none of the beneficial elements listed above.

Other benefits of ACV…

ACV has the ability to prevent the growth of bacteria and mould; therefore, adding it to your dog’s fresh foods as a nutritional supplement has an additional purpose. The acid content of ACV will help reduce the chance of bacterial or fungal growth on fresh foods during the period of time they are in your dog’s food bowl. However, I don’t recommend that you leave fresh

foods out any longer than 4-6 hours with or without the use of ACV. ACV can also be sprayed on seeds during the sprouting period to prevent the growth of pathogens, such as bacteria or fungi. Simply place ACV in a mister bottle and spray your seeds thoroughly with ACV after each rinse with fresh water until the seeds are sprouted. You can rinse the ACV from the sprouts before serving them to your dog; however, if some remains on the sprouts this is fine. If you use conventionally grown produce, you can remove pesticide residues by spraying the fruits and vegetables with ACV, wait 5 minutes and rinse. To eliminate bacteria from organic and conventional produce, spray with ACV, wait 5 minutes and rinse.

ACV has many healing abilities as well and is known to ameliorate certain symptoms of illness and disease. It works not by curing any specific illness, but by boosting the health of the individual with its nutritional and healthful qualities.

I will highlight just a few of ACV’s known potential benefits. Firstly, ACV may be an effective remedy for arthritis, gout and kidney disease and helpful in alleviating joint pain. The malic acid content of apples dissolves calcium deposits. ACV acts to balance the acid-alkaline pH levels in the body and helps to oxygenate the blood. 3 ACV has been helpful as an aid for digestion, helping to break down minerals, protein and fats. It also inhibits the growth of unfriendly bacteria in the digestive tract. ACV has detoxifies properties, strengthens the immune system and may ameliorate viral, bacterial and fungal infections. It is used as an antibacterial and anti-inflammatory medicine and has a natural antibiotic effect. Its benefits also include ameliorating respiratory infections and may reduce symptoms, such as watery eyes and nasal discharge. In addition, ACV can be helpful in eliminating both internal and external parasite problems. ACV has been used successfully for dry, itchy or infected skin problems. If applied topically to wounds and burns it will decrease the pain and promote healing. It also controls minor bleeding from cuts and abrasions. Apple pectin, a water-soluble dietary fibre found in apples and ACV, binds to toxins in the body and assists in their removal while it may also help relieve diarrhoea and constipation. And lastly, it may lower cholesterol levels and improve heart health.

ACV should not be used internally for those dogs that have irritation of the mucosa (lining) of the intestinal tract.

NOTE: ACV should be used diluted for application to the skin. Place in a mister bottle and spray to affected areas. (BE SURE YOU DO NOT GET THIS SOLUTION IN YOUR DOG’S EYES.)

How to use ACV…

I began using ACV as a supplement for my dogs in 1994. Some holistic health practitioners recommend that ACV be placed in a dog’s drinking water. I recommend placing it in fresh food because I believe that a dog’s drinking water should be free of additives, with the exception of an electrolyte solution or a medicinal product that is used on a short-term basis.

The dosage I use is one teaspoon for small dogs and 1 tbs. for medium-large dogs. It can also be given orally diluted in water under the guidance of a vet or holistic health practitioner. ACV can be useful to your dog’s health in conjunction with feeding it a wide variety of foods, but should never be looked upon as a panacea. Fresh food ingredients, such as raw meat and bones, fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy products make up the wholeness that will effectively help your dog to achieve optimum health. Often times one looks for the magic ingredient that will miraculously make their dog well. Whether it is an antibiotic, grapefruit seed extract, Aloe vera or milk thistle... there will always be a single popular or trendy supplement of the moment and this supplement will be promoted as the great healing agent. But, if we focus on the part rather than the whole we are not taking a holistic approach to our dog’s health. No supplement or ingredient will do much good, if the diet a dog is eating is substandard. A nutritious diet is the foundation for optimum health and 4 supplements are complementary to such a diet.

Briefly stated: ACV can provide your dog with minerals, acids, and enzymes for a long and healthy life.