

STEVIA – THE NATURAL ALTERNATIVE TO SUGAR

In December 2008 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved **Stevia** product rebaudioside A (rebiana) as a general purpose sweetener. **Rebiana** is an ingredient derived from the leaf of the stevia plant.

Stevia is a genus of about 240 species of herbs and shrubs in the Chrysanthemum family (Asteraceae), native to subtropical and tropical regions from western North America to South America. The species *Stevia rebaudiana*, commonly known as sweetleaf, sweet leaf, sugarleaf, or simply stevia, is widely grown for its sweet leaves. As a sweetener and sugar substitute, stevia's taste has a slower onset and longer duration than that of sugar, although some of its extracts may have a bitter or licorice-like aftertaste at high concentrations.

With its extracts having up to 300 times the sweetness of sugar, **Stevia** has garnered attention with the rise in demand for low-carbohydrate, low-sugar food alternatives. Medical research has also shown possible benefits of stevia in treating obesity and high blood pressure. Because stevia has a negligible effect on blood glucose, it is attractive as a natural sweetener to people on carbohydrate-controlled diets. Some countries continue to limit or ban its use until existing applications are evaluated. Stevia is widely used as a sweetener in Japan, South America, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand and parts of Asia.

Stevia Facts:

- 30 times sweeter than sugar
- Helps to keep the body's blood sugar in balance
- Placed directly in cuts and wounds, more rapid healing, without scarring, is observed
- Low caloric, aids weight management
- Improved digestion
- Effective results applied to acne, seborrhea, dermatitis, eczema, etc.
- Beneficial for hypoglycemics
- Increases energy levels and mental activity
- Reduces desire for tobacco and alcoholic beverages

Stevia Health Benefits:

Hypoglycemia

Scientific research has indicated that stevia regulates blood sugar levels, bringing them into normal balance.

Weight Management

Stevia has no carbohydrates (carbs) and contains no calories, making it an ideal sweetener for [weight loss or weight management](#). Stevia also helps users consume less calories by reducing overall hunger and cravings for sweet and fatty foods.

Cardiovascular

Studies have shown that stevia acts as a cardiovascular tonic, helping to lower [blood pressure](#) in people with high blood pressure.

Bacteria

Stevia inhibits the reproduction and growth of many pathogenic (harmful) bacteria and infectious organisms such as those that are responsible for the common cold, influenza (flu) and periodontal (tooth & gum) diseases.

Skin Care

When applied as a facial mask, Stevia Concentrated Liquid smooths out wrinkles, heals acne, treats seborrhea, dermatitis, and eczema. It also acts to help protect your skin from environmental damage and visible signs of premature aging.

To use Stevia Concentrated Liquid as a facial mask place 2-3 drops on the tip of your finger and gently pat on to your face. Repeat as necessary until you have applied to your entire face.

Leave the stevia on for at least 5 minutes to ensure all of it has dried. Once you are certain it has dried completely, rinse with slightly cold water (use no soap) and pat dry. Repeat one to two times daily.

Digestion

When consumed in tea, stevia has shown to be effective as a digestive stimulant improving digestive and gastrointestinal function while soothing stomach upset.

Addiction

Including stevia regularly in your diet helps reduce your body's desire for tobacco and alcohol.

When you use stevia, your body interprets the sweetness as that of forbidden goodies like high sugar foods. When you try to give up addictions such as tobacco and alcohol, often the body will begin to crave other items such as sweets. By using stevia to fulfill your sweet cravings, your body is more readily able to give up alcohol and tobacco.

Other Health Benefits of Stevia:

It is estimated that over 500 scientific studies have been performed on stevia. Many scientists have reported numerous health benefits to adding stevia to the daily diet.

- Scientific research indicates that stevia effectively regulates blood sugar in people with diabetes and hypoglycemia, bringing it toward more normal levels.
- Studies have indicated that stevia tends to lower elevated blood pressure while not affecting people with normal blood pressure.
- Stevia inhibits the growth and reproduction of oral bacteria and other infectious organisms. Regular users of stevia as a mouthwash or for brushing teeth (added to toothpaste) have reported an improvement to bleeding gum problems. This inhibition of oral bacteria may explain why users of stevia-enhanced products report a lower incidence of colds and flu. Subsequently, an increasing number of toothpaste manufacturers are now using stevia in their products.

- When applied externally stevia poultices and extracts have been observed to have therapeutic effect on acne, seborrhea, dermatitis and eczema. Extracts placed directly in cuts and wounds, have demonstrated rapidly healing without scarring.
- Other benefits of adding stevia to the daily diet include improved digestion and soothed upset stomachs.
- Stevia is also an exceptional aid in weight loss management because it contains no calories and reduces the craving for sweets and fatty foods. Steviosides, the principle sugar molecule component of stevia, pass through the human alimentary canal without being altered by digestive processes, demonstrating remarkable stability. They simply cannot be broken down into their metabolites under normal gastric conditions. As a result, the sugar molecules pass unchanged through the human gastrointestinal tract and are not absorbed into the blood, producing no calories. Preliminary research indicates that stevia may actually reset the hunger mechanism in people where the pathway between the hypothalamus and the stomach has become obstructed. In other words, it clears the communication pathway between the stomach and the brain, reducing hunger sensations faster.

Reference website:

<http://www.happystomach.com/stevia.htm>

<http://www.replacesugar.com/benefits.htm>

<http://healing.about.com/cs/herbaltherapy/a/stevia.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stevia>