

“My hope still is to leave the world a bit better than when I got here.”

- **Jim Henson**

I was never a “Muppets” fan, but I’m definitely a big fan of this quote by their creator. Not only is this my hope, but it’s also my goal. Hopefully, it’s the goal of everyone reading this right now. Why wouldn’t we want to leave the world a better place than how we found it? I think about it a lot, especially when I think about my dad and what happened to him. Most of you have heard me say at one time or another that if I could save just one person because of what happened to my dad, his death wouldn’t have been in vain. For years, I’ve worked really hard to educate people on how to take care of their own health, as well as the health of those they love. Have I succeeded? Only time will tell. But I do know quite a few people who have benefitted from things they’ve learned from me. That knowledge not only brings me comfort, but it also makes me smile. I truly want to help people, including those who don’t think they need it. It’s what makes me hungry for more knowledge and it’s why I keep studying and learning. I try to practice what I preach and live a healthy life. When times get tough, I hold onto hope. I try to remember that no matter how dark any given moment may be, faith, hope and love are not only possible, but are what will get us through those difficult times. It’s important to learn from the mistakes of yesterday and live only for today, because we aren’t promised tomorrow. Along the way, try to do something that really will make the world a better place. Remember, love is much better than hate. Hope is so much better than despair. Happiness is better than depression. So if we are loving, hopeful and happy, we really can change the world and make it a better place.

Yours in health,

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Are You Using Cloves?



I didn’t like cloves until I started using clove essential oil for my daily oil-pulling, which I wrote about in June 2025. But since then, they’ve certainly grown on me and I was inspired enough to start paying attention to articles that popped up about them. Like many health-related topics that catch my eye, I started doing research on cloves to learn more about what positive impact they can have. I was pretty surprised to learn about all the benefits that come from this little aromatic flower bud, which comes from an evergreen tree. It was a gentle reminder it was time to go back to my “*Food as Medicine*” series.

Cloves have been used in China for more than 2000 years as both a fragrance and a spice. Then they hit the international health scene several hundred years later. Ancient Persians actually used cloves as a love potion. They are incredibly aromatic, making them a popular choice for essential oils and are often used in cooking, baking and in sweet drinks such as mulled wine and chai tea. Because they have both anesthetic and antiseptic properties, cloves have traditionally been used to treat tooth pain and oral health issues. They’re often an ingredient in toothpaste, but they offer a number of other health benefits. Cloves are rich in Vitamins C and K and manganese and contain several natural compounds, the most important of which is eugenol. That’s the compound that’s responsible for many of cloves’ antioxidant, aromatic and pain-relieving properties. This month, I’m going to provide you with a few of their important properties and benefits, which I hope will encourage you to want to learn more.

Antioxidant Properties: Cloves are ranked #1 among herbs and spices for their antioxidant properties because of the eugenol compound. Eugenol can neutralize free radicals, which can help limit oxidative damage to cells. Most people know that free radicals can cause oxidative stress, which ultimately can lead to all different types of health issues.

Anti-Inflammatory Properties: The eugenol can also help reduce pain and swelling by its ability to impact biological pathways involved in inflammation. You can mix cloves with coconut or olive oil and apply it to sore muscles, shin splints, joints or tooth pain. Its anti-inflammatory benefits can also boost energy.

Antibacterial and Antifungal Properties: In lab experiments, eugenol inhibited certain bacteria and fungi. Clove fights the bacteria that can lead to urinary tract infections and can help prevent the growth of harmful microbes such as E. coli.

Expectorant Properties: Cloves have the ability to help reduce the longevity of colds, coughs and other breathing issues, including asthma. They help thin and get rid of mucus, as well as reduce inflammation in the airway. Cloves can also help soothe the throat and reduce coughing in addition to helping to protect against respiratory infections. Using cloves in teas or inhaling their steam can provide relief from respiratory discomfort and help enhance lung function.

Helps Improve Digestion: Cloves help encourage the production of digestive enzymes, which can help reduce bloating and gas, in addition to helping improve overall digestion. Those increased digestive enzymes can also help boost nutrient absorption by about 50%. Cloves can also help to reduce nausea.

Helps Improve Oral Health: Cloves contain antimicrobial properties that can help fight infections of the mouth and help relieve toothaches. The eugenol has local anesthetic and pain-relieving properties. Clove essential oil has been found to have the same numbing effect as benzocaine, which is a topical agent used by dentists, before injecting you with Novocain. As I mentioned above, I use 4 drops of clove oil in my daily oil-pulling routine, which has certainly helped improve my gum health and reduce plaque. Keep in mind when using clove essential oil that not all oils are created equally. Be sure to buy a quality oil labeled “*for oral use*”, as not all are.

Helps Encourage Sleep: I was surprised to learn that clove water is a natural sedative, so it can be used as a sleep aid without the horrible side effects of sleeping pills. It naturally increases melatonin and helps your liver undergo a nighttime detox flush.

To make clove water, boil 4 cloves in a cup of water. Once boiling, cover, reduce the heat and simmer for about 5 minutes. Covering the pan will keep the vapors from escaping. Let the mixture cool and then drink it 30 minutes before going to bed.

While typically safe, I'd be remiss to not share a few important safety notes.

- Large amounts of clove oil can cause serious poisoning, including liver injury, seizures, breathing problems, and burns to the mouth or throat. Children are especially vulnerable. Always mix it with a carrier oil.
- Cloves can thin the blood, so if you take blood-thinning medicines, have a bleeding disorder, use diabetes medication, have liver disease, or are preparing for surgery, be sure ask a trusted doctor before using any concentrated clove products. Potential interactions need to be assessed individually.
- If you're pregnant or breastfeeding, only use ordinary culinary amounts unless a trusted healthcare professional tells you otherwise.
- Store clove essential oil securely and out of children's reach.

You can add cloves to food, teas and even coffee. You can even chew one or two help freshen breath. Clove oil can be added to lip balm to help heal cold sores. It can even be used to repel mosquitos.

There is one last tidbit about cloves worth mentioning, but I'm going to leave it up to you to research if you're interested in learning more. Cloves have anti-parasitic properties that affect parasites at all the different stages of their lives, including their eggs. The research coming out about parasites and what they can do to you is pretty mind-blowing.

As always, if you have any questions, be sure to reach out. Have a wonderful month!