

“With everything that has happened to you, you can either feel sorry for yourself or treat what has happened as a gift. Everything is either an opportunity to grow or an obstacle to keep you from growing. You get to choose.”

- **Dr. Wayne Dyer**

I wanted to end the year with a quote from Dr. Dyer. He's one of my favorites, mostly because his words and ideas remind me so much of my dad. I think I've read all of Dr. Dyer's books and this quote really touches my heart. I can't believe it's been eight years (this month) that my brother was taken much too soon. I will always be thankful that the last words he heard from me, on our last phone conversation, were: *“I love you.”* Christmas is especially tough for me because it was his favorite holiday. Even in adulthood, he enjoyed it and looked forward to it like a little kid. I miss that. I still miss him. I chose this quote because it's an important reminder to me, during this very tough month, that I need to not feel sorry for myself that my immediate family only consists of Luke and me. I need to not feel jealous of those who have a big close family to share this important holiday. Instead, I'm going to choose to cherish my gift of Luke in my life and rejoice that God chose me to be his mom. I'm truly a lucky girl and I'm blessed with friends who have become my family. I'm also blessed by some amazing cousins who I don't often see, but who I know would be there if I needed them. With Christmas just around the corner, don't get caught up in all the “stuff” that comes with it. Focus on its true meaning and enjoy spending precious time with those you love.

Yours in health,

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The Many Uses of Baking Soda



Who knew that a product likely sitting in your pantry right now has so many health and other benefits? With the year ending, I wanted to somewhat get back to my *“food as medicine”* focus so you have an additional tool for your natural health toolbox to start off the new year right. I'm beyond excited about the prospect of Bobby Kennedy helping to Make America Healthy Again because as a nation, our citizens are only getting sicker. My biggest passion is and will continue to be helping people get and stay healthy naturally. So this month, I'm super excited to tell you about all the things a common household ingredient can do for your health and your home. Baking soda is truly a superstar. Its scientific name is “sodium bicarbonate”, and it contains sodium, hydrogen, carbon and oxygen molecules. It truly provides a plethora of important and practical uses. The list below is only a few of them.

1. **It's Alkaline.** I've written about how neither disease nor cancer can live in an alkaline environment. My June 2021 newsletter went into detail about the difference between being alkaline and acidic. When your body is in the healthy pH range of 7-7.4, you'll be able to avoid most health issues. When it's too acidic, you're basically a sitting duck for disease. Because baking soda is alkaline, it will neutralize acid, which helps you hit a home run for your health. One of the simplest things to do is add ½ to 1 teaspoon of baking soda to a glass of water and drink it. This isn't something you need to do every day and you shouldn't do it more than 2 weeks in a row. But it's a must-have ingredient for when you're starting to feel like you're coming down with something and you want to take some quick action to turn it around.
2. **It's a Natural Antacid.** Most people, when they're feeling heartburn or acid reflux, will pop a Rolaids or a Tums. A more natural and safer option is to mix ¼ to ½ teaspoon of baking soda in about 4 ounces of water and drink it. It will taste a bit salty, but should provide you pretty immediate relief. If you take any other medication, wait about 2 hours before consuming this as it may impact the effectiveness of prescription drugs. It also helps with digestion. But beware, your stomach NEEDS acid to properly function and often it doesn't have enough, which can cause other issues.
3. **It Reduces Bloating.** People become bloated for any number of reasons, including eating too much, eating too fast or for women, dealing with the monthly cycle. A short-term solution is to mix a teaspoon of baking soda with 4-6 ounces of water. It should help provide some pretty immediate relief.
4. **It Helps with Muscle Recovery.** I was quite surprised to learn that baking soda helps to neutralize the lactic acid buildup in your muscles after a tough workout with weights. This, along with stretching, can help reduce muscle soreness and ultimately increase endurance.

5. **It Helps with Kidney Function**. I was also surprised to learn that baking soda helps with the acidic/alkaline balance in the kidneys. One of the biggest jobs of the kidneys is to filter toxins out of the blood. Balancing the acidity in your blood takes some of the pressure off of the kidneys to help them function more efficiently.
6. **It Helps Reduce Inflammation**. I've often written about how inflammation is the leading cause of disease and illness. Baking soda can actually help reduce the body's overall inflammation, which can help prevent the onset of sickness. Simply mix baking soda and water per the above under #1, #2 or #3 and drink it. This can also decrease swelling and pain in the joints, making it ideal for people suffering from rheumatoid arthritis or other joint pain.
7. **It's a Natural Skin Exfoliator**. Believe it or not, baking soda can be used as a gentle exfoliant and it's super simple. Combine baking soda with water to make a paste. Use it to scrub away dead skin cells and then rinse it off with warm water. You can also add essential oil such as lavender for an additional benefit to your skin.
8. **It Improves Oral Health**. I think many people are aware that brushing with baking soda can help improve the whiteness in teeth. But did you also know that it can reduce plaque and freshen breath? Since it's alkaline, it helps to neutralize mouth acid, which can help prevent other dental issues. Swishing a mixture of baking soda and water around in your mouth, like you would with mouthwash (which you should avoid), will get the mixture into the areas between your teeth that are hard to reach when you brush. It also has both anti-microbial and antibacterial properties, which can reduce or even eliminate bacteria, which will help keep your gums healthy (and happy).
9. **It's a Deodorizer**. Most people know that putting an open container of baking soda into the refrigerator can take away unpleasant smells. But did you know that you can also use it on your armpits to do the same thing? It's a natural way to eliminate body odor. All you need to do is dab the powder onto your armpits, get dressed and get on with your day. But if you prefer to use deodorant, be sure to buy one that contains NO aluminum, which can and will pierce the blood-brain barrier, leading to more health troubles down the road.
10. **It Can Tenderize Meat**. If applied as a rub to tougher cuts of meats, baking soda will break down the protein fibers to make the meat more tender after cooking. However, after you rub it in to whatever meat you're preparing to cook, be sure to rinse it off before cooking because it will negatively impact the taste. Don't forget to add whatever spices you want after you rinse off the baking soda before cooking it.
11. **It Makes a Fantastic Cleaner**. Mixing baking soda with white vinegar makes a non-toxic and natural cleaner for your kitchen and bathrooms. I've heard that it does a great job with cleaning corroded car-battery terminals. I've also used it in place of the product "Bar Keepers Friend" to clean pots and pans from baked-on grease and grime. It's safe for use in ovens, sinks and showers. Here's another tip to safely remove stains from quartz and granite countertops: sprinkle baking soda on the stain, then add a few drops of lime juice and let it bubble. Wait a few minutes and then sponge off. Another interesting use is to sprinkle about a cup into the bottom of an empty dishwasher and run a short cycle on the hottest setting. This will not only clean the inside, but will also get rid of any unpleasant odor lurking inside.
12. **It Soothes Feet**. If your feet are tired after a long hike or trying day at work, take a few moments to relax and soak your feet in warm water in which you've added a few tablespoons for baking soda. The added benefit is it helps get rid of stinky feet.
13. **It Can Help Control Pests and Improve Soil**. Did you know that baking soda has some great outdoor uses? If you mix it with water, it can be used to keep pests and fungus away from your plants. It will help you maintain your garden without having to use harmful chemicals and pesticides to keep the bugs and other critters away. Baking soda can also help increase the PH level in soil if it's too acidic. Be sure to use it sparingly and monitor the pH levels in the soil so you don't give yourself another problem.

The best way to store baking soda is in a cool dry place, away from direct sunlight and moisture. I keep mine in the refrigerator and/or in my garage. One word of caution: if you're going to consume it, be sure to use one that's naturally derived and organic. That means, I'd avoid the Arm and Hammer brand and choose an organic product like Bob's Red Mill. Some brands contain aluminum and those should be avoided like the plague. Pregnant women and children should avoid consuming baking soda and it really shouldn't be taken for more than 2 weeks at a time.

Please keep in mind that baking soda doesn't play well with a few items: ammonia, bleach, alcohol or chemical cleaners. A combination of any of those items can cause dangerous fumes, so stick mixing it with water, lemon or lime juice or vinegar.

The above is just the beginning of a long list of things you can do with baking soda. I hope this has inspired you to do some of your own research and come up with even more.

Have a wonderful month, Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!!