

Oats

The Many Virtues of Oats (*Avena Sativa*)

by Linda Bertaut

Once thought to be a weed only suitable as feed for livestock, oats have been proven valuable as both a food and skin care ingredient. Evidence shows that oats were in Northern Europe as early as the Bronze Age and made their journey to North America in 1602 with an English explorer. The genus name *Avena* means nourishing while *Sativa* means cultivated.

Packed full of nutrients, all parts of the plant are used; grain, straw, and seed. Oats provide the best amino acid balance of all grains; a high lipid content to retain moisture; minerals for stronger skin, hair, and nails; plus an assortment of B vitamins to reduce stress and anxiety. Furthermore, in 1995, the Quaker Oats brand petitioned the FDA and was granted permission for the first heart health claim related to a specific food.

Oats have more water soluble fiber than other grains forming a thick mucilaginous gel which absorbs and moves excess sugars and fats through the body. By slowing the absorption of glucose in the blood and moving cholesterol out of the body, it helps to stabilize blood glucose levels and lower cholesterol for a healthier heart and body.

The anti-inflammatory property of oats is due to its high lipid content that softens and heals dry, itchy skin. Both oat grain and oat straw are used in shampoos, moisturizers, cleansing bars, and dusting powders.

According to Jerry Whittemore, former VP at Jason cosmetics, with a doctorate in pharmaceutical chemistry, oats have two major accomplishments:

- Oats are a category 1 over-the-counter (OTC) monographed human protective drug. Meaning it helps the skin to do what it is supposed to do. By increasing the skin's protective barrier it keeps water in and bacteria, fungus, pathogens, and poison oak out.



Oatmeal is one of the best natural treatments for dry skin 

- Oat Beta Glucan, is a strong antioxidant derived from natural oats. It scavenges free radicals that relate to mistakes in cell replication which leads to aging. Beta Glucans are used in premium priced antioxidant lotions and creams to reduce aging of skin cells.

Whittemore says, "The FDA Human Monographs are very important to our personal care industry because they allow marketers to market actual, real drugs (ie: acne therapy drugs) without expensive premarket approval."

Oat Straw is the grass and leaf portion of the plant commonly used as a tea or bath soak. Containing properties of the whole grain it is also used as a nerve tonic for the release of stress, exhaustion, and even depression.

Wild Oats (Bach Flower Essence) captures the "energy vibration" of the plant. It may be used orally, on pulse points, in sprays, and in baths. Wild oats is used to alleviate depression, open the intuitive channel, think outside the box, adapt and have the flexibility to change as needed.

Now that you are in the know... you may eat, drink, and be merry with the many virtues of oats.



In 1933 a woman known on court records as Mrs. Brown consented to have her eyelashes permanently dyed. Unfortunately, the product contained paraphenylenediamine, a chemical extremely toxic to the body, as the dyeing agent. Within hours of the treatment, Brown began experiencing severe symptoms of stinging and burning eyes which ultimately lead to blindness in Brown and 15 other women and caused the death of another. As a result in 1938, after this and several others similar incidents, Congress granted the FDA the right to regulate cosmetics.

Plain rolled oats can be used to make a gentle and very effective natural skin cleanser, facial scrub, and soothing facial mask

Recipes:

Oat Straw Bath

Soothe itchy, flaky, skin; relieve stress and anxiety with an herbal bath infusion. Add oat straw tea in proportions of one cup oat straw to one gallon bath water. Boil the herb in a large pot, strain, and pour into bath.

Oatmeal and Brown Sugar Body Scrub

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons ground oats
- 2 tablespoons aloe vera gel
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon almond oil or olive oil

Preparation:

1. Grind oatmeal in a coffee grinder or food processor until sandy in consistency.
2. Mix all ingredients until it resembles a paste.
3. Apply on moist skin after a shower.
4. Massage in a circular motion gently with fingertips.
5. Rinse with warm water for baby smooth skin.

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Oatmeal, when used as a skin cleanser, actually absorbs and removes surface dirt and impurities while providing very gentle exfoliation, leaving skin smooth, soft, and clean... without soap.

Oat Nutrition Facts

Having oat everyday benefits both the heart and body. A small bowl of oatmeal porridge is the perfect way to jump start your day. This contributes to losing weight and lowers cholesterol in order to prevent the arterial hardening that contributes to coronary artery disease. Oats increases your consumption of whole grains and is potentially full of proteins. It contains nutrients such as iron, magnesium, and thiamin that helps a person to lose weight instantly.

The Health Benefits of Oats: Soluble Fiber

The soluble fibre in whole oats comprises a class of polysaccharides known as beta-D-glucans or beta-glutans. Beta-glucans comprises of indigestible polysaccharides extensively found in oats is located primarily in the endosperm cell wall. Oats has the highest lipid content of any cereal than maize. The polar lipid content of oats is greater than that of other cereals, since much of the lipid fraction is enclosed within the endosperm. To consume, it is certain that the soluble fiber breaks down as it goes through the digestive tract. This lowers LDL ("bad") cholesterol absorbed into the bloodstream and possibly lessens the risk of heart disease. As a result it slows digestion and broadens the feeling of fullness.

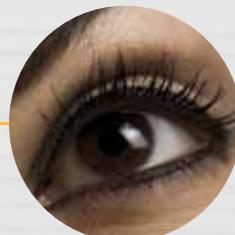
The External Benefits of Oats:

- Skin inflammations – poultice and fomentation
- Skin diseases – topically, oats are used for skin conditions including itchiness, dryness, oiliness, weeping eczema, and contact dermatitis. Also, it is applied to the skin for chicken pox, osteoarthritis, liver disorders, and added to foot baths for chronically cold or tired feet.

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A dampened brush was rubbed against a cake containing soap and black dye in equal proportions and applied to the lashes. Still it was extremely messy. No significant improvement occurred until 1957 with an innovation by Helena Rubinstein.



In the 1960s, liquid eyeliner was used to create thick black and white lines around the eyes in the makeup fashion associated with designers like Mary Quant.