

Give honey credit, but not too much

**By Evelyn Phillips
MSU Extension Service**
Many people appreciate its flavor and soothing affects, but honey may receive more credit than it deserves.

Since ancient times, people have tried to use honey for medicinal purposes. Even today, people hope it will manage allergies, weight or diabetes. However, the use of honey just might not be as powerful as some believe. Mississippi State University Extension Service health specialist David Buys identified some common misconceptions about honey. He said honey is a natural product that appeals to a lot of people who are looking for a simple and easy fix to their health problems. Honey certainly has positives aspects, such as antiseptic properties, but it is not a medicine.

Jeff Harris, Extension bee

specialist said honey has been used to soothe wounds and promote healing.

“There is a type of bandage that contains Manuka honey that helps prevent bacteria in the wounds,” Harris said.

While honey is not a proven cure to an actual disease or sickness, some people have had success using honey to help with allergy or cold symptoms, such as a sore throat. Honey is a wholesome sweetener and can add flavor when cooking; however, it should not be a sugar substitute for those with diabetes.

“Unfortunately, honey is not the cure-all some folks are looking for it to be. Unprocessed honey can actually be dangerous for some people, especially children under 2 years,” Buys said.

Honey can be dangerous for infants and small children because it can cause

botulism. Botulism is an illness that is spread through the consumption of food that has been in contact with contaminated soil, found on all farms. Botulism can lead to paralysis, breathing difficulties or even death.

Harris added that consumers should not let terms like “raw honey” impact their perceptions of honey products.

“There is no legal statement as to what defines raw honey,” Harris said. “It is actually more of an advertising gimmick than a real difference in product. Almost all commercial beekeepers heat their honey to 120 degrees Fahrenheit for an hour or so to make sure they kill the sugar tolerant yeast,” he said.

Harris goes on to explain what sugar tolerant yeast is and why it is so important that it is killed before honey

is consumed.

“These yeasts are naturally occurring fungi that can survive in high sugar environments. These yeasts make spores, and the spores may be found in just about any honey on the planet. Fermentation produces ethanol and other chemicals as a by-product, which will sour and ruin honey,” Harris said.” If the fermentation is controlled, honey can be converted into mead – which is one of the oldest alcoholic beverages known in the world.”

So, beekeepers have

learned that heating honey for short durations at key temperatures will kill the yeast and its spores without significantly damaging the honey itself. Therefore, it makes more sense for them to automatically heat their honey than it is to hope that it will not ferment before the consumer buys and eats the honey.

Alma Harris, Washington County Extension coordinator, said people with diabetes should be careful about thinking they can use honey as a substitute for natural

sugar, or sucrose, that will not affect their blood sugar.

Harris said honey is a carbohydrate. The amount and type of carbohydrate consumed affects blood sugar levels. One tablespoon of honey contains at least 17 grams of carbohydrates. While that seems small, those carbohydrates add up depending on how much a person consumes in a day.

“Although honey cannot actually cure a sickness, it has a lot of antioxidants and has been associated with soothing the effects of the common cold, coughing, bronchitis and sinuses problems,” she said.

Harris said using honey as a substitute for sugar requires changing measurements. Only three-fourths cup of honey equals one cup of sugar.

“When using honey in a recipe, the liquid has to be decreased by 2 tablespoons, and the temperature needs to be lowered by 25 degrees Fahrenheit,” Harris said.

“Honey is best used as a sweetener in smoothies, on unsweetened cereal and in hot tea,” she said.



Honey offers a sweet flavor and may soothe sore throats, but most other medicinal qualities remain unproven.
(Photo by Canstock)

Ole Miss student with local ties wins football toss scholarship at Egg Bowl



As the official halftime sponsor of the Egg Bowl, College Savings Mississippi hosted the Tuition Toss on the field during halftime of the Thanksgiving game between University of Mississippi and Mississippi State University. Two students, who were chosen at random from a pool of registered contestants, were given 30 seconds to throw up to 30 footballs through a target. The student with the most footballs through the target was the winner while the other student was the runner-up. Michael Boyles (pictured at right), a 19-year-old student at Mississippi State University from Clinton, won the tuition toss and went home with a \$2,529 MACS (Mississippi Affordable College Savings) scholarship. Hayden Tutor (pictured second from left), an 18-year-old student at the University of Mississippi from Madison, was the runner-up, winning a \$529 MACS scholarship. Tutor is the son of Heather and Sonny Tutor, of Madison; and grandson of Pam Killebrew, of Madison, Zack and Jill Killebrew, of Tchula, and Wayne and Carol Tutor in Greenville. Mississippi State Treasurer Lynn Fitch (pictured at left) was on hand to present the scholarships to the recipients.

(Photo submitted)



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