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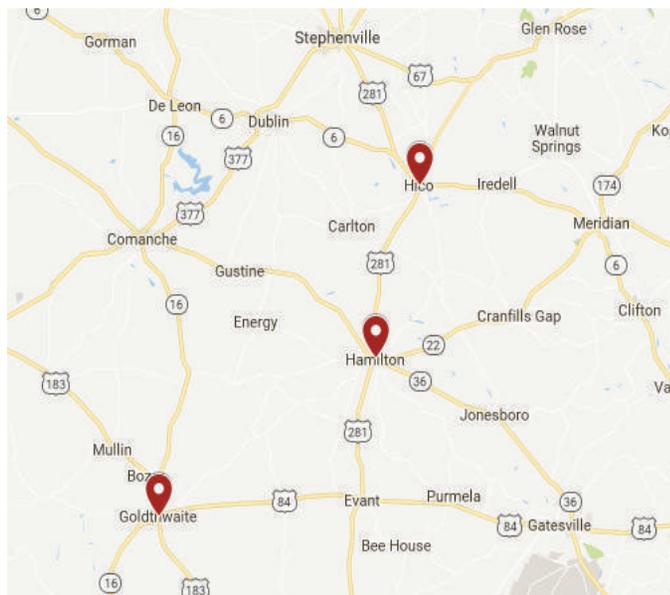
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The many health benefits of honey

Honey is nature's sweet nectar. While honey certainly can add flavor to various recipes or be enjoyed straight out of the jar, it has many other surprising benefits as well. Used since ancient times as both a food and for medicinal purposes, honey can make for a versatile addition to anyone's diet.

- **Substitute for refined sugar:** Refined sugar offers little to no nutritional value and is full of empty calories. Healthline says that honey has bioactive plant compounds and antioxidants as well as trace amounts of vitamins and minerals. The antioxidants in honey, which include phenols and flavonoids, may help prevent cardiovascular disease, stroke and some types of cancer.

- **Has antibacterial and antifungal properties:** According to the Honey Research Unit at the University of Waikato in New Zealand, honey is antibacterial. Honey will not foster growth of these microorganisms because it contains small amounts of hydrogen peroxide. Because of these properties, some people say that honey can help disorders such as ulcers and bacterial gastroenteritis, or other conditions where fungi and bacteria grow unchecked.

- **Soothes sore throat:** Taking a tablespoon of honey to relieve itchy, dry throats and coughs can be effective. In a study published in the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, it was determined that honey could be just as effective at stemming cough as the popular medicine dextromethorphan.

- **Helps reduce inflammation:** Honey is well known for its anti-inflammatory properties. As a result, honey can help treat diabetes, cardiovascular disease, atherosclerosis, and other diseases traced back to widespread inflammation, according to Greek researcher Natalia Vallianou of the Evangelismos Hospital in Athens.

- **Regulates blood sugar:** The combination of fructose and glucose in honey may help the body regulate its blood sugar levels, which could be beneficial to those with diabetes. Certain types of honey also may have a lower hypoglycemic index, which means they don't cause a dramatic shift in blood sugar, according to the food and health resource Real Food for Life.

- **Promotes healing:** There is evidence that clinical use of honey on burns and wounds can be beneficial. Data published in the Scientific World Journal said that honey can be used to dress wounds and that it produces similar results to other topical treatments in promoting healing.

Honey is a natural wonder that can be equally useful in the kitchen and in the medicine cabinet.

400 N Brown St. , Hamilton, TX 76531 - facebook.com/hamiltonhealthcaresystem