

## Soothing Aloe Vera

The herbal remedy aloe vera come from the plant, aloe. Originally found in Africa, the aloe vera herbal plant is also called the "lily of the desert," the "plant of immortality," and the "medicine plant." Liquid that comes from the plant has a bitter taste or "alloeh" in Arabic, hence the name.

### The Herb

The aloe vera plant belongs to the family Asphodelaceae with about 400 known species currently grown. Classified as succulent plants, aloe grows in the more arid parts of Africa and in the mountains of tropical Africa. The most distinguishing part of the aloe vera herbal plant is its leaves which are large, thick, and fleshy. The leaves are shaped like lances with a sharp apex and spines lining their margins.

### Early Applications

As early as 1500 BC, Egyptians have noted the use of the aloe vera plant as treatment for burns, infections, and parasites. Evidently, the juice of the plant leaves yields certain substances, called aloes, which are good purgatives. Some species of the aloe, like *Aloe venenosa*, may produce poisonous juice and are therefore not recommended. However, most species, such as the *A. vera*, *vulgaris*, *socotrina*, *chinensis*, and *perryi* contain aloes that have therapeutic uses.

Thorough research has been done on the aloe vera plant since the 1930s. Studies indicate that the clear gel of the aloe vera herbal plant has a dramatic ability to heal wounds, ulcers, and burns. By coating the affected areas with the gel-like substance, the wound is safeguarded from infection-causing bacteria and other micro bodies, thus speeding up the healing rate.

### Juice from Aloe Vera

Since it is a succulent, the aloe vera plant is composed of about 96 percent water. The remaining 4 percent consists of active ingredients, including essential oil, amino acids, minerals, vitamins, enzymes, and glycoproteins. Thanks to the many active constituents present in the aloe vera herbal plant, many modern healers have used it in their liquid health treatments. Regularly, the aloe vera herbal juice is combined with other medicinal plants in order to increase its potency. The aloe vera herbal juice produces a relieving effect on digestive tract irritations caused by disorders, such as colitis and peptic ulcers.

### Aloe Vera Supplements

With its many vitamins and minerals, aloe vera is perfect as an herbal food supplement. It helps aid digestion and assists in blood and lymphatic circulation. Aloe vera herbal supplement is also thought to improve kidney, liver, and gall bladder functions.

The plant has at least three fatty acids that have anti-inflammatory properties. These fatty acids make the aloe vera herbal supplement beneficial for the stomach, small intestine, and colon. It naturally alkalizes digestive juices to prevent an excess of acidity, which is a common cause of indigestion.