

11 Amazing Health Benefits of Using Baking Soda

By Dr. Mercola

You probably have at least one box of baking soda in your home right now. If you're like many Americans, you might have a box in your pantry for baking, one in your refrigerator to absorb odors and another under your kitchen sink to use for cleaning.

What you might not have considered is that baking soda can be used for health purposes, too, so you might want to stash another box in your medicine cabinet.

What Exactly Is Baking Soda?

It's 100 percent sodium bicarbonate, which can be used as a leavening agent in baked goods. When mixed with an acid, baking soda reacts, making bubbles and giving off carbon dioxide gas, which causes dough to rise. Anecdotal reports throughout history suggest that many civilizations used forms of baking soda when making bread and other foods that required rising.

In its natural form, baking soda is known as nahcolite, which is part of the natural mineral natron. Natron, which contains large amounts of sodium bicarbonate, has been used since ancient times. And no, you don't need to get aluminum-free baking soda (you are confusing that with baking powder), as baking soda is already aluminum free....

For instance, the Egyptians used natron as a soap for cleansing purposes. However, it wasn't until 1846 that Dr. Austin Church and John Dwight began to manufacture and sell the compound we know as baking soda today. By the 1860s, baking soda was featured in published cookbooks but was still primarily known as a cooking additive.¹ By the 1920s, however, its versatility was expanded on and by the 1930s it was widely advertised as a "proven medical agent."

11 Ways to Use Baking Soda for Your Health

Baking soda is one of the least expensive home remedies to keep on hand. In addition to using it for minor accidents and injuries, baking soda can become a part of your regular hygiene routine.

1. Natural Deodorant

If you want to avoid the [parabens](#) and aluminum found in many deodorants and antiperspirants, try a pinch of baking soda mixed with water instead. This simple paste makes an effective and simple natural deodorant. You can also simply brush some dry baking soda under your arms.

2. Insect Bites and Poison Ivy

Apply a paste made of baking soda and water to insect bites to help relieve itching. You can also try rubbing the dry powder onto your skin. This is also effective for itchy rashes and poison ivy. Baking soda helps to relieve minor skin irritation and itching by neutralizing toxins and irritants on your skin's surface.²

3. Heartburn, Indigestion, and Ulcer Pain

Most over-the-counter antacids contain some form of bicarbonate. Baking soda works by immediately neutralizing stomach acid, helping to relieve heartburn, indigestion and even ulcer pain. I have personally recommended this to many, including family members, and have been surprised how remarkably effective it is.

Dosing is typically ½ teaspoon fully dissolved in a half a glass of water, taken every two hours (do not take more than seven ½ teaspoons in 24 hours, or three ½ teaspoons if you're over 60).³

This should only be used as an occasional (not chronic) treatment, however, and be careful not to consume excessive amounts, which can cause serious electrolyte and acid/base imbalances.⁴

4. Foot Soak and Exfoliator

Add three tablespoons of baking soda to a tub of warm water for an invigorating foot soak. You can scrub your feet with a baking soda paste for additional exfoliation. A paste made from three parts of baking soda combined with one part water can be used as an exfoliator for your face and body, too. It's natural, inexpensive and gentle enough to use every day.

5. Relaxing Soak

Baking soda and apple cider make a wonderful spa-like bath for soaking. It also cleans the tub and the drain, as a bonus!

6. Hand Cleanser

Mix three parts baking soda with one part of water to make a natural hand cleanser that will scrub away dirt and neutralize odors.

7. Splinter removal

Add a tablespoon of baking soda to a small glass of water, then soak the affected area twice a day. Many splinters will come out on their own after a couple of days using this treatment.

8. Sunburn Remedy

Add ½ cup of baking soda to lukewarm bathwater, then soak in the tub for natural relief. When you get out, let your skin air dry, rather than toweling off the excess baking soda, for extra relief. You can also add a mixture of baking soda and water to a cool compress and apply it to the sunburn directly.

9. Enhanced Sports Performance

Distance runners have long engaged in a practice known as "soda doping" -- or taking baking soda capsules -- before races to enhance performance, a measure that's thought to work similarly to carbohydrate loading. It's also been shown to improve speed among swimmers.⁵ While I don't suggest you try this at home, it's another example of baking soda benefits. Researchers noted:⁶

"Essentially, sodium bicarbonate is an alkali substance that increases the pH of the blood. This seems to reduce and offset the acidity produced in the muscles during intense, anaerobic exercise that produces lactic acid most quickly, such as fast running or swimming."

10. Tooth and Gum Paste

Baking soda has a mild abrasive action that helps to remove plaque and polish, clean, and deodorize your teeth.⁷ One review of data from five controlled clinical studies found that toothpaste containing baking soda "enhanced plaque removal effectiveness of tooth brushing to a significantly greater extent" than brushing with a non-baking soda toothpaste.⁸

Baking soda also has antibacterial activity and has been found to kill *Streptococcus mutans* bacteria – a significant contributor to *tooth decay*.⁹ For an incredibly effective tooth and gum paste, use a mixture of six parts of baking soda to one part of sea salt.

Place them in a blender and mix for 30 seconds, then place in a container to use. Wet the tip of your index finger and place a small amount of the salt and soda mixture on your gums.

Starting with the upper outside gums and then the inside of the upper, followed by the lower outside of the gums then the lower inside, rub the mixture onto your teeth and gums. Spit out the excess. After 15 minutes rinse your mouth. This mixture is incredibly effective at killing bacteria.¹⁰

You need to exert some caution in this area though as many believe baking soda can be too abrasive on your enamel, and [Dr. Curatola](#) believes that killing the oral microbiome may be highly counterproductive.

11. Teeth whitener

For a natural way to whiten your teeth, crush one ripe strawberry and mix it with 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda. Spread the mixture onto your teeth and leave on for five minutes. Then brush your teeth and rinse. This method should be used no more than once a week, as excessive use could potentially damage your tooth enamel.

How to Use Baking Soda as a Natural Cleanser

If you find it hard to believe that something as simple and inexpensive as baking soda could *really* clean your home, consider this: baking soda was used to clean and restore the inner copper walls of the Statute of Liberty during its 1986 restoration. It effectively removed grime without damaging the copper¹¹ – so think it might work around your home, too? Here are some of baking soda's top uses for cleaning:

<p>Baking soda is great to scrub your bath and kitchen with. Put it in a glass grated cheese container with a stainless steel top that has holes in it, and just sprinkle the baking soda on the surfaces and scrub. You may add a few drops of your favorite essential oil to this. Lavender and tea tree oil have potent anti-bacterial qualities.</p>	<p>Baking soda mixed with apple cider vinegar is a bubbly combination that has many uses. As a drain cleaner, sprinkle baking soda down the drain, then add apple cider vinegar and let it bubble for 15 minutes, then rinse with hot water. This is a safer alternative to dangerous drain cleaners.</p>
<p>Soak pots and pans in hot water and baking soda for 15 minutes to easily wipe away baked-on food.</p>	<p>Use baking soda to scrub your barbecue grill.</p>
<p>Clean baby toys in a mixture of 4 tablespoons of baking soda and 1 quart of water.</p>	<p>Baking soda can also be used as a fabric softener in your laundry, or to get your clothes whiter and brighter (add one cup to your laundry load).</p>
<p>Baking soda is a natural carpet cleaner. Sprinkle it onto carpets, let it sit for 15 minutes, then vacuum it up.</p>	<p>To polish silver without using toxic silver polish, fill your kitchen sink with hot water, add a sheet of aluminum foil and baking soda, and let the silver pieces soak until clean. It is an easy and fun way to clean silver.</p>
<p>Sprinkle baking soda in your shoes for</p>	<p>In the event of a minor grease fire in</p>

<p>a natural deodorizer.</p>	<p>your kitchen, use baking soda to help smother out the flames.</p>
<p>Sprinkle baking soda on a vegetable brush to help remove dirt and residue from fruits and veggies.</p>	<p>Make a paste of baking soda and water and use it to scrub away grime from your shower and bath.</p>



