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Hydrogen Peroxide

This is Health Matters, reporting on one of the best home remedies available -- hydrogen peroxide.

Hydrogen peroxide is a compound of water and oxygen. It is the only germicidal agent composed of just these two elements. The chemical formula for hydrogen peroxide is H₂O₂. The chemical formula for water is H₂O. In other words, hydrogen peroxide has one more oxygen molecule than water. When hydrogen peroxide reacts with organic material, it breaks down into water and oxygen molecules. This process of breaking down organic matter kills germs, which is why hydrogen peroxide has been called the world's safest all-natural effective sanitizer. It kills germs by oxidizing them.

And what is oxidation? Think of it as a controlled burn. When you put peroxide on a wound it bubbles up. That bubbling action is oxidation. The oxidation kills bacteria. And it cleans the wound by moistening and loosening dirt and dried blood. It also removes dead tissue. However, not all bacteria are killed by hydrogen peroxide. Some micro-organisms fight against it, which is why it isn't always 100 % effective. But, even when hydrogen peroxide doesn't kill every single germ it encounters, it still inhibits their growth. As a result, it can help prevent an infection from becoming worse.

Working on these multiple levels is why hydrogen peroxide is a valued antiseptic and wound cleanser. At the same time, hydrogen peroxide can destroy certain cells needed for the healing process. Which is why once the wound is cleaned and starting to heal, hydrogen peroxide is no longer needed.

Hydrogen peroxide also kills fungal spores and prevents fungal infections. These broad-spectrum anti-microbial properties make it an excellent disinfectant for surfaces where food is prepared, such as cutting boards and counter tops. Hydrogen peroxide comes in different strength, but unless you have a specific, diagnosed use for higher strength, the common 3% drug store variety is all you need for cleaning wounds and for other health and sanitizing applications.

For example, hydrogen peroxide is an effective mouthwash. One highly recommended by dentists as a cure for gum disease, and regular use of a hydrogen peroxide mouthwash prevents gum disease in the first place. To make a mouthwash, you dilute 3% hydrogen peroxide with an equal amount of water. On

the final rinse, you need to leave it in your mouth for 10 minutes. Then spit it out and rinse your mouth with water, and by the way, if you use hydrogen peroxide daily as a mouthwash, you'll find over time that it whitens your teeth. So regular use provides a double bonus; healthy gums and whiter teeth.

Hydrogen peroxide is also recommended as a nasal spray for sinuses. Although this use is less well known, it is considered safe and effective. To make a nasal spray, add one tablespoon of 3% hydrogen peroxide to 1 cup of non-chlorinated water. Non-chlorinated is important. You don't want the chlorine interacting with the hydrogen peroxide.

Talking about chlorine, hydrogen peroxide is a bleaching agent. You can put a cup of peroxide in the washing machine to keep white clothes white. It is also very effective at removing blood stains, and other stubborn stains. Hydrogen peroxide is effective for getting rid of mold infestations. It can work as well as bleach; without the risk of inhaling the toxic molecules that bleach emits.

Getting back to the medical applications of hydrogen peroxide. Other medicinal uses include gastrointestinal cleansing and using it internally as a cancer cure, but these uses are considered controversial by medical professionals. Part of the controversy has to do with the fact that hydrogen peroxide does its work through oxidation. When oxidation is not controlled within the intricate balancing act underlying our body systems, disease is the result.

Over the years Health Matters has done many reports on foods and herbs that provide anti-oxidant action. Anti-oxidants are essential to controlling oxidation in the body, and foods that contain them are a critical part of a healthy diet. Without anti-oxidants, oxidation can run rampant and slowly burn healthy cells. We'll do an update on anti-oxidants soon. In the meantime, hydrogen peroxide is a low-cost germicidal agent you may want on your home remedy shelf.

Sources and Links

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