

CLAY

A healing gift from the Earth

Ancient wisdom reminds us that the gifts from our Earth are available for our nourishment and healing.

Calcium Bentonite clay is a mineral-rich, edible clay that has been used for centuries to detoxify and cleanse the body of parasites, heavy metals and metabolic toxins. Simultaneously, through ionic exchange, the clay releases minerals and trace elements into the body. The dual action of detoxification and mineralization ensures a gentle, yet highly effective detox that is suitable for people of all ages, including during pregnancy. It is also very effective at treating skin problems and wounds when applied topically – which I found out first hand through my experience in treating my daughter’s eczema. Clay is the choice remedy when dealing with toxicity, skin problems, allergies and autism (due to its association with the heavy metal, mercury).

My experience with clay:

I successfully used clay to heal my daughter’s eczema when nothing else worked. The eczema started on her arm and rapidly began spreading. I tried a few natural products but to no avail. I was not going to resort to cortisone with all its side effects. Within two applications (as a poultice), the eczema was much improved, within 2 days greatly reduced and within one week, totally healed. The secret to the successful use of clay is in its application. You apply the paste to moist skin, spray with a fine mist of water, cover with a dressing and then bandage up firmly. You can use cling wrap over the bandage to keep it secure and to keep the moisture in. I did this twice daily for the first 4 days and then once daily as an overnight treatment. For the clay to work it must remain moist which is why the bandage is necessary. Without the covering, clay dries out and loses its magnetic draw. You may find that the skin looks more inflamed after the first or second application – this is normal as the toxins are pulled to the surface. Persist and you will see the benefits. In between poultices, I used shea butter for its soothing, moisturizing and nourishing properties but coconut oil is also excellent.

I also used a clay paste on our pup who developed these raw patches on his skin. Within a few applications it was considerably better and after less than a week, it was gone.

Then, our domestic worker arrived one morning with a mass of fever blisters on her upper lip. I gave her some clay and shea butter and gave her instructions on how to use it. Within 3 days it cleared up!

A regularly cleansed body is central to optimal health.

When the body fails to properly eliminate internal pollutants, imbalance occurs and disease is often the result. In this day and age it is difficult to completely avoid chemical exposure. The air, the water and our food are often heavily contaminated with poisons, toxins and heavy metals; even when we do our best to avoid them, we are still exposed to some degree. It is in everyone’s best interest therefore, to make regular (even daily) ingestion of clay powder, a top priority.

“Clay and water... those two lifelines are all you will often need to return your body to a state of optimal health”. - Perry A, author of *Living Clay, Nature's Own Miracle Cure*

“The use of clay for both internal and external use puts in our hands the healing power of mother earth and there is little that can compare or compete in the world of medicine. There is no healing system more powerful than that which employs Nature’s primordial substances, materials so pure and close to nature that they yield benefits without the typical side effects of most medicines” – *Dr. Mark Sircus, IMVA.*

Below is an extensive write up on the use and benefits of clay ingestion and topical application by the highly respected and reputable Dr. Mark Sircus of the International Medical Veritas Association:

<http://imva.info/index.php/2010/02/edible-clay/>

~ HISTORY OF CLAY USE ~

- It was used during the Balkan war of 1910 to reduce mortality from cholera among the soldiers from sixty to three percent. During World War II, Russian and French soldiers were given mandatory rations of mineral clay in their diet every day in order to avoid the spread of diarrhea which was ravaging other neighboring troops.
- Mahatma Ghandi himself used healing clays in natural medicine for more than 25 years.
- Mineral Clay was made popular in Europe in the 1800s' as an all-purpose and simple healing agent by Dr. Kneipp and other revered naturopaths such as Kuhn, Just, and Felke. Dr. Kneipp advised applying a mixture of mineral clay and vinegar for all fractures.
- Bentonite adsorbs radiation so well, in fact, that it was the choice material used to dump into Chernobyl after the nuclear meltdown in the former Soviet Union."

~ CLAY: WHAT IT IS, HOW IT WORKS AND HOW TO USE IT ~

Bentonite clay is sometimes referred to as "green" healing clay. It is created naturally from the combination of volcanic ash minerals called montmorillonite and ocean water. Depending on the source, bentonite clay is loaded with naturally occurring minerals such as potassium, calcium, sodium, iron, magnesium, manganese, silica, zinc, sulfur and trace elements. The names Bentonite and Montmorrillonte are often used interchangeably as these two clays are essentially the same thing – they belong to the Smectite group of clays which are the most superior clays for therapeutic use.

Clay molecules carry a negative electric charge while impurities (such as parasites, heavy metals, chemicals, metabolic wastes, free radicals and other toxins) carry a positive charge.

The positively charged impurities are thus drawn to the clay like a magnet and are removed from the body with the clay via the alimentary canal. This process is referred to as *adsorption*. Then, through the process of *absorption*, toxins are also drawn into the clay and trapped between the clay particles. Therefore, by acting like a magnet (adsorption) as well as a sponge (absorption), the clay works very effectively at removing from the body a great deal of impurities.

The additional benefit of mineral supply to the body through the process of ionic exchange serves to further enhance the cleansing and healing process. Based on these two actions, it seems obvious that clay be considered the cleansing / detoxification agent of choice.

Clay is taken orally as a powder mixed into water. It is tasteless and easy to drink. There is a little grittiness involved but no bad taste. Follow a glass of clay water with a full glass of water and drink water frequently after that to allow the clay to do its work. Insufficient fluid intake may result in constipation. If you find that clay makes you constipated despite drinking a lot of water, add fibre such as psyllium husks or even ground up flax seeds (grind them yourself and use immediately). The addition of 1 – 2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar enhances the healing action of clay by the drawing of minerals from the clay for absorption by the body.

Clay can also be applied to the skin as a face or body mask or as a clay poultice for healing skin ailments and wounds. Topical application works by drawing toxins from the body through the skin. (More on the uses and benefits of external application below)

Clay baths for adults and children are powerful detoxifiers and should especially be encouraged when ill.

Internal and external use of bentonite clay on a regular basis serves as one of the most effective natural means of toxin removal, and as such should be a standard household item.

~ HEALTH BENEFITS OF TAKING CLAY INTERNALLY ~

Clay's main action (through oral ingestion) is that of body detoxification through the cleansing of the stomach, small intestine and colon. Its secondary action is that of mineral supply through ionic exchange. These actions lead to numerous benefits, some of which are briefly listed below;

A HEALTHY LIVER: When pollutants (toxins, parasites and heavy metals) are removed from the body by clay, the liver has less waste to deal with. A healthy liver is essential to good health, and particularly important in preventing cancer.

A HEALTHY BOWEL: If you have problems with constipation your bowel will be overloaded with metabolic waste and toxins that your body cannot excrete. Good health depends on the effective elimination of impurities. Good health therefore requires a clean bowel. Clay, by clearing the bowel of waste and toxins, will alleviate constipation provided plenty of water is taken following clay ingestion. Clay produces desirable bulk in the intestinal tract, which in turn stimulates normal intestinal motions and contractions that move food substances in the intestine. Clay is not a laxative and therefore does not irritate the mucous membranes.

ENHANCED NUTRIENT ABSORPTION: The digestive tract, once cleansed, becomes more efficient at digestion thus more nutrients will be absorbed from food.

REMOVAL OF PARASITES: Clay intake stimulates the gall bladder to increase the flow of bile – this destroys and inhibits parasitic growth. In addition, worms who are clay eaters themselves are attracted to the clay and then eliminated with the clay from the body. Parasites are unable to reproduce in the presence of clay. Take once or twice daily for at least 4 – 6 weeks. Continue for longer if you feel it necessary. Do this 2 – 3 times each year.

HEALING ECZEMA, ITCHING, HIVES & ACNE: Skin conditions are a manifestation of toxic build up in the body. When you rid your body of impurities your skin condition greatly improves. Clay should be used internally and externally for best results.

ALLERGY & HAYFEVER RELIEF: Allergy and hay fever are caused by the release of histamines. When the liver becomes congested and toxic, it cannot produce the necessary antihistamines to neutralise the allergic reactions. When you clean and re-build the liver, the allergies will disappear. Clay also neutralises allergens thereby preventing an allergic reaction.

CURING ANEMIA: A malfunctioning liver will be unable to purify the blood, supply the necessary nutrients nor increase the number of red blood cells or regulate their iron content. Clays also provide both ferrous and ferric iron in an easily absorbable form. It is possible therefore, that along with an improved diet that ensures optimal nourishment, clay used as a daily supplement may greatly assist in healing anemia.

IMMUNE ENHANCEMENT: To be well and remain well, we need to have a well functioning, strong immune system. Immune function is governed by the Kupfer cells in the liver, which in turn respond to the chemical balance in the colon. So by keeping your gut toxin free through daily clay intake you ensure a healthy liver and in turn a healthy immune system.

ARTHRITIS & GOUT RELIEF: By clearing waste, pollutants and uric acid from the body, less is left to settle in vulnerable areas of the body causing joint pain and stiffness. These conditions are associated with excess body acidity, which can be alkalisied by taking clay daily. The combination of reducing toxic build up and alkalisied the body makes clay an effective healer.

HEAVY METAL REMOVAL: Clay attracts heavy metals (which are positively charged) and removes them from the body via the alimentary canal. Heavy metal toxicity poses a major threat to our health and is difficult to avoid in today's heavily polluted world. It is known to remove radiation, arsenic, lead, mercury, and aluminium amid other toxic metals in less than six weeks. The more you use, the quicker you detox."

RADIATION ABSORPTION: Radiation material is positively charged and is therefore attracted to the negatively charged clay particles, which then through adsorption and absorption are either attracted to the edge of the clay or are drawn into the clay, and all are then eliminated from the body with the clay via the alimentary canal. Today we are exposed to

radiation from so many standard household (think microwaves!) and office devices, computers and electronic equipment, not to mention dangerous electromagnetic radiation from cellphones and cellphone towers. Medical scans, x-rays and other electronic devices further add to our body burden, as does a trip to the airport! Dr. Jensen, N.D., D.C., Ph.D., suggests using bentonite to absorb radiation from the bones. This could be extremely important for those who have undergone radiation treatment for cancer.

Russian scientists use bentonite to protect their bodies from radiation when working with nuclear material, by coating their hands and bodies with hydrated bentonite "magma" before donning radiation suits. Bentonite adsorbs radiation so well, in fact, that it was the choice material used to dump into Chernobyl after the nuclear meltdown in the former Soviet Union."

CONQUER CHRONIC FATIGUE: CFS is associated with diminished immune function due to viral attack. The goal is to detoxify the body, rejuvenate the liver and enhance immune function. Clay indirectly enhances immune function by helping heal the liver.

BLOOD PURIFICATION & ENRICHMENT FOR GOOD CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH: Clay's cleansing action results in the blood being purified and mineral-enriched. Clean, healthy blood will thus be pumped to the heart, reducing vessel weakening (that is caused by weak blood) and the resultant impairment of nutrient delivery essential for blood vessel reinforcement. When your blood is clean and nutrient enriched, you improve heart health.

HEARTBURN, ACID REFLUX AND INDIGESTION: Clay does this by absorbing excess stomach acids.

MINERAL REPLENISHMENT: Quality clays will provide plentiful minerals which are lacking in our foods today due to the poorer overall quality of our soils. The body requires minerals in easily assimilated forms obtained from food, clean water and other natural substances such as clay, sea and rock salts, seaweeds and algae. By ensuring balanced mineral supply to the body from a variety of sources, your body is capable of achieving excellent health. Clay is an incredibly useful aid in mineral restoration when used correctly - taken on an empty stomach two hours away from food and supplements, and three hours away from medications. Be sure to drink plenty of water to help clay do its work, and to prevent constipation. According to Dr. Mark Sircus of the IMVA, the body will absorb the minerals it needs and the rest will be excreted via the stool. This means that there is no concern in overdosing on the minerals in clay.

Note that adding 1 – 2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar to your liquid clay solution just before drinking is said to assist with drawing minerals from the clay.

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- Ran Knishinsky, author of *The Clay Cure*, writes that clay is part of his diet and he never skips a day without eating clay. He says "When clay is consumed, its vital force is released into the physical body and mingles with the vital energy of the body, creating a stronger, more powerful energy in the host. The natural magnetic action transmits a remarkable power to the organism and helps to rebuild vital potential through the liberation of latent energy. When the immune system does not function at its best, the clay stimulates the body's inner resources to awaken the stagnant energy. It supplies the body with the available magnetism to run well. Clay is said to propel the immune system to find a new healthy balance and strengthens the body to a point of higher resistance."
- Raymond Dextreit writes that "clay stimulates the deficient organ and helps the restoration of the failing function. Clay is a powerful agent of stimulation, transformation and transmission. Clay contains highly active ingredients, able to induce cellular rebuilding and to hasten all organic processes". He also says that "clay acts with wisdom - it goes to the unhealthy spot"

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By releasing the toxic burden of the body and restoring its nutritional status, we can improve our internal environment and achieve good health.

~ INTERNAL DOSAGE GUIDELINES ~

For general health maintenance: 1 teaspoon per day in a glass of water, taken on an empty stomach, preferably an hour before going to bed or first thing in the morning, one hour before breakfast. Remember to put your teaspoon of clay into a small glass of water last thing at night (if you plan on having it in the morning) or around 5pm if you're having it at night. The clay needs a few hours to dissolve in the water. At first it will clump together and you will wonder how you are possibly meant to drink it! Just give it time to settle and dissolve. An additional teaspoon from time to time will serve to enhance daily cleansing and mineral replenishment.

If you have a large frame, 2 teaspoons or 1 tablespoon may be your ideal maintenance dose.

For minor health issues and ailments: 2 teaspoons twice daily. Reduce to maintenance dosage when issues are resolved.

Infants should take $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon in the bottle. Small children should take the same amount, but more in times of illness.

Constipation is alleviated with tablespoon dosages 3 times daily but it is essential to be well hydrated to prevent further constipation.

For chronic conditions and diseases: 1 – 2 tablespoons, 2 – 3 times daily.

Always mix powder in a glass of water, drink and then follow with another full glass of water. Ensure regular water intake. Dehydration will result in constipation.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: Take clay on an empty stomach – either half an hour to one hour before food or two hours after food. Do not take clay within 3 hours of taking medication. Preferably take at least two hours away from supplementation

~ TOPICAL CLAY APPLICATION ~

Applied topically, clay works by the same action of adsorption thereby removing toxins from the body through the skin. This makes clay facials or body masks a must-do as often as possible. Apply clay to skin conditions whilst at the same time taking internally and you stand an excellent chance of resolving the skin issue. Skin problems are often signs of an overburdened liver. Revive the liver and your body will heal and repair itself.

Clay applied to the skin is excellent for healing acne and eczema, drawing out blackheads, for burns and bruises and for healing wounds and bites.

HOW TO MAKE A CLAY PASTE FOR USE AS A FACIAL MASK OR POULTICE:

You will need:

- Clay powder & water (preferably purified or filtered)
- Coconut oil (optional, but recommended if skin is dry or to prevent drying)
- A plastic spoon and a small glass or ceramic dish (do not use a metal spoon!)
- A spray bottle filled with water
- A piece of cling wrap – about 3 times the size of the problem area – preferably folded double for thickness. If you are dealing with a very large surface area that requires healing, wrap the clay around the area. So if your leg is covered with eczema, simply the wrap the cling wrap around the entire leg.
- A bandage

The amount of clay powder that you use will depend on how much paste you need. For a facial mask, 2 teaspoons is fine whereas if you need to apply paste to a large area, you will need anything from a few tablespoons to a few cups. In general you use double or 2.5 times the amount of water to clay powder. So the ratio of clay powder to water is usually 1:2 or 2.5.

1. Using a **plastic or wooden spoon** put your clay powder in a ceramic or glass bowl.
2. Add the water, starting with the same amount of water to clay, mix well, and then add more water, little by little and continue to mix until you have reached the desired consistency. You need a smooth, moist but firm paste that is spreadable. It is essential to get the consistency correct. You do not want a dry, crumbly paste. I recommend the addition of coconut oil or olive oil to the paste, especially if you have dry skin. For a facial mask, ½ teaspoon of oil is fine. For a small tub of paste, add 2 – 3 teaspoons.

IMPORTANT: use a plastic or wooden spoon whenever you are working with clay – never metal.

CLAY FACIAL MASK:

Wash face and then apply clay paste whilst the skin is still damp. Leave on for 20 minutes before washing off. It is also a good idea to spritz the face with water every 5 minutes or so to re-hydrate the clay and activate its magnetic draw. Using a wet cloth, wipe off mask. Be sure to remove all traces of the clay paste.

You will be amazed at how soft, smooth and glowing your skin looks. The glow comes from the increased circulation to the skin.

Apply a natural moisturiser afterwards – I generally use coconut oil.

Ideally do this face mask once weekly.

CLAY POULTICE:

A clay poultice is ideal when you need the paste to remain wet on the skin for several hours to give it time to do its healing work.

1. Make the paste as per the instructions above, in the quantity that you need.
2. Ensure the skin is clean and slightly moist. You should give the area a wipe with a damp cloth prior to applying the paste.
3. Apply the paste evenly and fairly thickly.
4. Spray the area covered with the clay paste with a little mist of water and quickly cover with a dressing and then the cling wrap, followed by the bandage. This is generally how it is done but although not ideal, I prefer to put the plastic against the skin first as I find it retains the moisture best this way round – plastic first covered by the bandage. Ensure that it is firm but not too tight.
5. For the first 2 applications leave on for around 30 minutes and monitor how the body is reacting. The drawing up of toxins can produce uncomfortable detoxification symptoms, depending on the severity. If you feel fine then increase the time period to an hour or two for the next one or two applications, after which an overnight poultice should be fine – and very beneficial. Be cautious about using clay poultices close to body organs.
6. Leave on for at least 3 hours at a time or preferably overnight. To start with, you could apply a poultice first thing in the morning and leave on till after lunch time, remove and apply shea butter a few times during the course of the afternoon and then put on another poultice after bath and leave on overnight.
There are no hard and fast rules as to how long the poultice should remain on but I recommend that when you first start to treat the skin condition that you use the poultice for long periods with just an hour or two between applications, preferably using shea butter in between.
7. Remove bandage, plastic & dressing, wipe off the clay properly, leave to air a bit and then apply shea butter.

~ PRECAUTIONS ~

The beauty of clay ingestion / application is that it can be used by anyone, no matter the age or ailment. It is safe even during pregnancy. There is some controversy as to whether it should be used continuously on a daily basis. As mentioned earlier, Ray Knishinsky, author of The Clay Cure uses it daily and says that it is perfectly safe to do so. My view is that we should take a break from our regular supplements from time to time. I feel that a 4 - 6 week course of clay with a 1 – 2 week break before continuing again is a good way to go.