

Honevo® for Cold Sores

FAQs for users

honey
lab®

What is Honevo®?

Honevo® is a topical pharmaceutical-grade kanuka honey formulation, developed as a treatment for various skin diseases.

Is Honevo® an effective treatment for cold sores?

Yes. Small studies suggested that medical honey may be an effective treatment for cold sores¹⁻². In a 952 person clinical study, the cold sores healing time, duration and pain and maximum severity of pain were the same for users of Honevo® Cold Sore and for topical acyclovir (also known as Viraban or Zovirax)³. Study participants preferred the experience of using Honevo® Cold Sore compared to topical acyclovir.

A survey of Honevo® Cold Sore users⁴ found that:

- 84% gave it a 4 or 5 star rating (out of 5 stars)
- 84% said that it was the best product that they had used for cold sores
- 89% planned to continue using Honevo® for future cold sores
- 94% said that it was good or excellent for helping to heal the lesions

As well as being all natural, Honevo® has many advantages over topical acyclovir, including:

- Looks better
- Tastes better
- Can be used as often as required
- Better value (as larger pack size)
- Not just for the early stages of the cold sore

How do I use it?

Apply to the affected area as often as you wish. It is recommended to apply it at least 5 times a day and as often as required. Applying it more often may reduce symptoms and improve the effectiveness.

Is it safe if pregnant or breastfeeding?

Yes.

What if it goes in my mouth?

No problem! Honevo® is safe to swallow and tastes great!

How is it different to other Honevo® products?

Honevo® skin care products all contain the same strong kanuka honey formulation, however they are packaged and labelled differently so that users can choose a product which is appropriately named, with specific application instructions for the condition.

Can I use it with other cold sore treatments?

You can take tablets for cold sores in addition to using Honevo®, but it is not recommended to use any additional creams on the cold sore.

Why Honevo® rather than another medical honey product?

There are 3 main reasons:

1. All honeys have different properties, and only the Honevo® formulation has been shown in clinical research to be an effective treatment for cold sores.
2. Honevo® is pharmaceutical-grade (see below for why this is important).
3. Honevo® contains a small amount of another natural product, glycerine, which improves its physical characteristics, making it less sticky than regular honey. It is also far more temperature stable and remains consistently fluid when warm or cold.

Who did the research, was it independent?

The large phase 3 study was undertaken independently by the Medical Research Institute of New Zealand, who are based in Wellington and led by Professor Richard Beasley. In addition, the protocol for the large ongoing study was peer-reviewed by a New Zealand dermatologist and also the world-famous Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, USA.

Who funded the research?

The research was funded by HoneyLab – who are conducting the world's biggest programme into the medical uses of honey – and supported by Callaghan Innovation.

What is kanuka honey?

Honey is classified according to its floral source and it can either be monofloral, if it is made predominantly from the nectar of one type of flower, or multifloral. Honevo® is created from kanuka honey which is sourced from hives that are located in dense kanuka plantations.

How is it different to manuka honey?

All honeys have different properties. We use kanuka as we found that it has very high antibacterial activity compared to other honeys. Kanuka honey also has anti-inflammatory properties whereas manuka and others do not.

How does it work?

Cold sores are caused by the herpes simplex virus and are effectively a difficult to heal wound on the lip. Honevo® works by creating an environment on the skin that promotes skin healing. It keeps the area hydrated and acidic, both of which help wound healing. Honey has a number of physicochemical characteristics which give it unique properties that are responsible for its effectiveness in treating some medical conditions:

- Osmotic effect – honey is a concentrated sugar solution predominantly consisting of fructose and glucose. Few water molecules are available for micro-organisms and therefore it is a poor environment for their growth
- Hydrogen peroxide – this is slowly released when the honey comes into contact with body fluids and has antiseptic properties.
- Acidity – honey is very acidic and with a pH of 3.2 to 4.5, is as acidic as some vinegars, which also makes micro-organism growth difficult.
- Antioxidants – it contains bioflavonoids and other antioxidants which may contribute to its activity.

What is “pharmaceutical-grade” honey?

Honey applied to the skin should be “pharmaceutical-grade”, also known as “medical-grade”. Application of untreated or raw honey often causes local inflammation which can be quite severe, as it often contains many impurities from bees and hives; it literally contains “bees knees”. Pharmaceutical-grade honey is made by purifying raw honey in a two-step process involving filtration and thermalization.

How long does the treatment last?

Honevo® should be used until symptoms have disappeared. The tube of Honevo® Cold Sore contains more than enough for the treatment of one cold sore episode, and should be discarded after the cold sore has healed. Cold sore treatments should be used for one episode only as there is a risk of the product being contaminated by viruses or bacteria.

Who are HoneyLab?

HoneyLab are a New Zealand pharmaceutical company making medical products from natural sources and are running the world's largest programme of medical honey research. The research programme is directed by Dr. Shaun Holt. Shaun has both Pharmacy and Medical degrees from the UK and is one of New Zealand's most experienced clinical researchers.

Who can I contact for more information?

orders@honeylab.co.nz

References:

1. Fingleton J, Sheahan D, Cave N, et al. Topical kanuka honey for the treatment of cold sores. *Advances in Integrative Medicine* 2014; 1(3) December: 119–123
2. Al-Waili, Noori S. Topical honey application vs. acyclovir for the treatment of recurrent herpes simplex lesions. *Medical Science Monitor* 10.8 (2004):MT94-MT98.
3. Semprini A, Singer J, Braithwaite I, et al. Kanuka honey versus aciclovir for the topical treatment of herpes simplex labialis: a randomised controlled trial *BMJ Open* 2019;9:e026201.
4. HoneyLab data on file.