

Honevo[®] for Cold Sores

FAQs for Users



What is Honevo[®]?

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

Is Honevo an effective treatment for Cold Sores?

Yes. A HoneyLab study comparing Honevo[®] to the most well known cold sore treatment acyclovir cream (often marketed as “Zovirax”), found that the time for cold sores to heal was shorter when Honevo[®] was used¹. Also, a study conducted in Dubai found that honey was far superior to acyclovir in terms of healing cold sores². In addition, HoneyLab have a huge clinical study of nearly 1,000 people ongoing whereby people with cold sores use either Honevo[®] or acyclovir cream. The results are expected in 2018 and we expect them to show that Honevo[®] is superior in terms of reducing the time it takes for cold sores to heal.

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 applying it more will maximize the speed of healing.

How long does it take to work?

Cold sores that are not treated usually take 5-7 days to go away on their own. The ongoing study will tell us for sure, but current information suggests that Honevo[®] will reduce this by at least 1-2 days.

How long does the treatment last?

Honevo[®] should be used until symptoms have disappeared.

Can I use the Honevo[®] for several outbreaks?

No, this is not recommended, cold sore treatments should be used for one episode only as there is a risk of the product being contaminated by viruses or bacteria.

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 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.

Is it better than using other treatments?

We think that this is the case: Honevo[®] fights the virus which causes cold sores. Additionally, unlike other treatments, Honevo[®] is excellent at speeding up the healing of wounds, and once a cold sore lesion has developed on the lip it is a wound that needs to heal.

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 medical-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 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.



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 we know that honey is effective against this. Honey also reduces inflammation and Honevo® helps to heal wounds, and a cold sore is a wound. 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 “medical-grade” honey?

Honey applied to the skin should be “medical-grade”, also known as “pharmaceutical-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”. Medical-grade honey is made by purifying and sterilizing raw honey in a two-step process involving super-filtration and pasteurization.

Who can I contact for more information?

For information on the science - Dr Shaun Holt: shaun@honeylab.co.nz
For all other queries - Julia Ammundsen: julia@honeylab.co.nz

How long does it last?

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.

What other conditions can Honevo treat?

Pilot studies have shown that Honevo® is potentially also effective for rosacea, nappy rash, molluscum contagiosum and acne. In a pilot study of patients with psoriasis it was as effective as aqueous cream and there were also some benefits seen in people with eczema and other skin conditions.

Who are HoneyLab?

HoneyLab is a New Zealand pharmaceutical company with several platforms of clinical research, including dermatology, pain, and nutrition. HoneyLab 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, lectures at Victoria University of Wellington and is one of New Zealand’s most experienced clinical researchers.

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.