



SECRET (NATURAL) INGREDIENT

Surprising uses for oatmeal

Heart healthy? Check. And that's just the beginning of oatmeal's superpowers.

BY SUSAN HALL



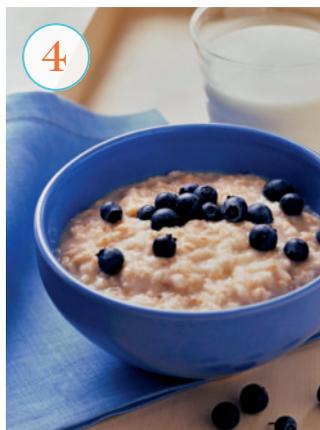
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1 Pore refiner

This mask, from New York City dermatologist Amy Wechsler, MD, makes use of oats' saponins, cleansers that remove dirt from pores: Mix ½ cup oatmeal, ½ cup hot water, and ¼ cup honey in a food processor. Let cool, and apply. Wait 10 minutes, and rinse.

2 Diet helper

Replace all-purpose flour with homemade oat flour (grind oats in a processor) for baking cookies, pancakes, and quick breads. You get twice the fiber so you feel fuller, but fewer calories, says Frances Largeman-Roth, RD, *Health's* Senior Food and Nutrition Editor.

3 Exercise booster

Eat some oatmeal pancakes for a better workout? Believe it. British researchers found that foods like oatmeal up endurance when eaten about three hours before exercise. Oats trigger the body to burn fat more quickly to fuel muscles.

4 Cancer fighter

Have oatmeal for breakfast and help prevent breast cancer. Premenopausal women on diets rich in fiber from whole grains, like oats, reduce their risk by up to 41 percent, suggests a study in the *International Journal of Epidemiology*. ●