

Apricot Kernel Oil Health and Beauty Benefits

Apricot is a stone fruit and is usually considered a healthy one. But it also has little known medicinal properties. Its flesh is abundant in minerals. The oil obtained from its seed (kernel) is therapeutic for dealing with asthma, bronchitis, tuberculosis and anemia. Aside from the health benefits, the oil can also provide beauty benefits for skin and hair. The seeds can be ground into a coarse grain and added to soap, body wash and skin cleansers to provide a natural and organic exfoliator. The oil can be added to shampoos, conditioners, body lotion and facial masks as a moisturizer. The kernels are roasted in order to obtain this oil.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF APRICOT KERNEL OIL

Apricot kernel oil is rich in fatty acids in addition to Vitamins E and A. It is therefore therapeutic for dry and/or mature skin. If you experience dry, itchy skin, especially after a hot shower or bath, apply this oil to your damp skin to seal in moisture. This oil is used as a carrier oil ingredient in many health and beauty products like soaps, facial masks, skin exfoliators, and lotions. It's absorbed into the skin quickly doesn't have an oily or greasy feel. It is also use for massage. Massaging the body with this oil can help eliminate stress, pain and inflammation. Because it is mild and non-irritating, it can even be used on infants and children. It could also be used as a carrier oil in aromatherapy oil blends.

1. MOISTURIZER

Apricot kernel oil is a good moisturizer and helps treat dry skin especially the elbows, feet, knees and hands. Using this as a skin moisturizer on a regular basis makes skin smooth, soft, and healthy.

2. NOURISHES

The gamma linoleic acid (GLA) contained in apricot seed oil is great for toning and maintaining the firmness of the skin. Additionally it is abundant in Vitamins A and E, which are known to slow the signs of aging like wrinkles and fine lines. The anti-inflammatory properties of this oil are effective in getting relief from skin conditions like eczema and psoriasis.

3. SKIN HEALTH

Apricot kernel oil is an excellent moisturizer for the skin. It is light, gentle, and mild. Additionally it can be used as a face serum due to its lightness as it won't make skin oily to the touch. It is great for keeping dry skin moisturized.

4. SKIN SCRUB

The apricot kernels can be ground to a coarse meal and added to skin cleansers to make an exfoliating scrub. This works wonders for exfoliating dead skin cells. The oil can also be used as a scrub by adding sugar to it. Then rub the face carefully with it. This exfoliating scrub will eliminate impurities and cleanse the skin.

5. HAIR HEALTH

Apricot kernel oil is a wonderful moisturizer for the hair as well. Add this to other oils like coconut oil, amla and olive, and massage into your scalp. Let it sit for around 20 minutes and wash off with a gentle shampoo. This scalp treatment can really help with a dry and flaky scalp. Additionally, this oil blend can help moisturize damaged and chemically treated hair. It will restore hair's natural shine.

6. FACE OIL

Apricot kernel oil will help enhance skin tone, nourish the skin and reduce the look of wrinkles and fine lines, as well as skin pigmentation resulting from blemishes. However, this oil should be avoided by individuals who are prone to or are susceptible to acne. This is because this oil is mildly comedogenic and can block skin pores. It features a comedogenicity of 2, which means it could lead to pimples and blackheads.

7. NIGHT OIL

Apricot kernel oil is a good night oil. For best results, combine it with an essential oil of your choice and massage it onto the skin. Clean the skin with a toner before you apply this oil. Leaving this oil on your face overnight will help open up blocked pores to eliminate dirt, in addition to moisturizing the skin.

8. AS AN UNDER EYE CREAM

Apricot kernel oil can be used similarly to sweet almond oil for healing under eye skin. It is great for alleviating dark circles and puffiness. Regular use of apricot kernel oil, will decrease the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles near the eyes (crow's feet).

9. HEART HEALTH

Consumption of apricot kernel oil can be healthy for the heart and the cardiovascular system. This oil has shown the ability to lower the chance of myocardial infarction (heart attack) in rats. One can take apricot oil in food by using it in salad dressing and for cooking.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

This is the nutritional value of 1 cup (8 oz.) of apricot kernel oil.

| Nutrients | Amount |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Calories from Fat | 1927 |
| Monounsaturated fat | 131 g |
| Omega 6-Fatty acids | 63872 mg |
| Phytol sterols | 580 g |
| Polyunsaturated fat | 63.9 g |
| Protein | 1.4 g |
| Saturated Fat | 13.7 g |
| Vitamin E | 8.7 g |

USES

Besides its use as a therapeutic agent in home remedies for skincare, apricot kernel oil has many other uses. It is usually eaten in the form of salad dressings. But it also has industrial applications.

1. FOR SOAP MAKING

Apricot kernel oil is used as the base component in soaps. It can also be used in homemade soap recipes to have a reduced oily residue. It's a nice base oil for soap in conjunction with coconut oil, which is also commonly used in soap making. Apricot kernel oil adds a slight nutty fragrance to the soap. Additionally, it is an excellent carrier for other essential oils used in soap making, such as lemon, lavender and Jasmine essential oils.

2. PRODUCTION OF BIODIESEL

Apricot kernel oil is being considered as a possibility source of biodiesel. Particularly the oil from wild apricot varieties.

BUYING AND STORAGE

Before purchasing apricot kernel oil, one should ensure that the oil conforms to the safety standards regarding amygdalin content as well as other such chemical compounds. The healthiest commercially available apricot kernel oil is cold pressed and organic. This oil is fairly sensitive to light and heat, and may become rancid quickly. When this change happens, it's easiest to spot in the taste of the oil. This oil should always be stored in a cool, dry place, away from heat and light. The shelf life of the oil can vary from 6 months to a year. You can extend the shelf life by refrigerating the oil. This oil is usually more expensive than other carrier oils. The organic, edible kind is even more costly.

SIDE EFFECTS, SAFETY AND TOXICITY

Apricot kernel oil is safe to use topically. If used internally, one should note that apricot kernels contain a fair amount of a substance known as *amygdalin*. This compound is metabolized by the body and converted into cyanide, a highly poisonous chemical. The concentration of cyanide in the human body will lead to respiratory failure and will result in death.

Amygdalin is generally removed from oil extracted from the kernels of stone fruit. This is done to ensure that the oil contains far less amygdalin than is considered safe. This is the case with almond, apricot, and peach oils. However, one should take care to be absolutely certain that the oil purchased has been processed and filtered to eliminate the amygdalin content.

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION OF APRICOT

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Scientific name | <i>Prunus armeniaca</i> |
| Kingdom | Plantae |
| Subkingdom | Tracheobionta |
| Order | Rosales |
| Family | Rosaceae |

| | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Genus | Prunus L |
| Species | Prunus armeniaca L. |
| Super division | Spermatophyta |
| Division | Magnoliophyta |
| Class | Magnoliopsida |
| Sub Class | Rosidae |

REFERENCES:

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