

# Aloe vera helps diabetics



**ALOE VERA** is known for its cosmetic uses, but a new study has revealed that it is also effective in normalising blood glucose levels in diabetic rats. This means the plant may emerge as a substitute for current medicines available for diabetes.

In the study — carried out by scientists from Vellore Institute of Technology and Christian Medical College — rats were induced with diabetes and then given a dose of aloe vera extract. It was found that this treatment brought the fasting blood glucose level to normal.

Aloe vera is a cactus-like plant with green, dagger-shaped leaves that are fleshy, tapering, spiny, margined and filled with a clear viscous gel. The plant, present in the arid regions of India, is used as a popular folk medicine.

Besides diabetes, it is believed to be effective in treating stomach ailments,

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gastro-intestinal problems, skin diseases, constipation, radiation injury, inflammation, wounds and burns.

The new study also showed that changes seen in the liver and small intestine of the diabetic mice were reduced after they were given the plant extract.

“The results of the study show that aloe vera extract brings back fasting plasma glucose levels to normal in diabetes-induced rats,” the research team said in a paper published in the journal *Current Science*.

Although the exact chemical compounds responsible for the glucose-lowering effect of the plant still remain speculative, experimental evidence indicates that it contained ‘an anti-diabetic property’, the scientists said.

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