

SEAWEED - Health Benefits

by Burren Smokehouse.

When walking on the shore looking at seaweed on the sand and the rocks, it might appear as a very simple and kind of boring plant. And yet, it is a very fascinating one.

There are so many fantastic properties that can be attributed to seaweed that we will not be able to mention them all here. On this page we have mentioned the main ones, but let's look at some interesting facts which Rosaria from Algaran told us about.

A good start would be John B. Keane's quote who was a great believer in seaweed:
«God created seaweed... The seaweed made the world.»

It might sound a bit strange, but in the big scope of things he is not too far off the mark. As we all know, life began in the seas. Sea water is very mineral-rich, and therefore algae absorb plenty of mineral elements, vitamins and trace elements. **The mineral content of some seaweeds account for up to 80% of their dry matter.** But it gets better: some brown seaweed like *Ascophyllum nodosum* (also called Knotted Wrack) or *Fucus vesiculosus* (commonly called Bladder Wrack) **contain all the minerals there are on the planet!**

The health-beneficial properties of seaweed have been known for hundreds if not thousands of years. In ancient Polynesia for example, the healing power of algae was well known, and it was used to treat all kinds of swellings, wounds and bruises. Seaweed was called the "Sailor's Cure" by the seafarers of old.

The oils in seaweed have long been known to recuperate from illness by detoxifying the body and helping the renewal of damaged skin cells.

The vitamins, minerals and all other good natural chemicals that are part of seaweed have numerous health benefits for us humans – and none of the huge side effects that chemical medicine can have:

1. Benefits of treatment from within (algae supplements in food):

- Seaweeds contain algal carotenoids and polyphenols which have been proven to be powerful antioxidants. Antioxidants help the body fight against oxygen-free radicals which damage cells and are the cause of aging and disease. The antioxidant combines with the free radical to prevent it from attaching to and damaging the cells in your body.
- The Iodine prevalent in seaweed are essential for the thyroid gland to regulate the body's metabolism. An under-active thyroid can lead to weight gain, fatigue, cold sensitivity, loss of hair.

2. Benefits for the skin:

- Seaweed improves the suppleness and the elasticity of your skin. It acts as an anti-ageing and anti-cellulite agent. It detoxifies, tones and cleanses the skin. It can stimulate the renewal of damaged skin cells. It moisturises and smoothes the skin.
- Seaweed has been used as an effective treatment for conditions like Psoriasis, Eczema, Dermatitis and Acne.
- Seaweed reacts with protein to form a gel which has a distinctly moisturising effect on the skin. Creams and soothing facial masks can have a positive effect on problems such as facial wrinkles.

3. Benefits for the hair:

- Seaweed has a distinct moisturising effect on the hair making it shinier and softer. Hair

treated with seaweed shampoo and conditioner has more body and less electrostatic charge.

In short we can say that algae is so health-beneficial that we cannot help wonder why we re-discover its benefits only now. It can be taken for internal and outside treatments of the body, whether we are healthy or suffering from certain ailments. The good thing is that it is pure goodness without the nasty bits, that it is suitable for vegetarians and vegans, that no animals suffered in lab tests, and that most if not all ingredients of the products here displayed are organic. **Discover how seaweed products can have a positive effect on your life!**

Seaweed has many uses: you can eat it dried (in salads and hot dishes), or take it as a health supplement in the shape of capsules, or use it in cosmetics like creams, shampoos, conditioners, soaps, massage oils...

Some interesting facts about seaweed:

Seaweed does not bleach in the sun, as it has a built-in factor against the damages of sun rays.

Seaweed has no roots to feed through. The “roots” that we see on them only serve to hold them in place on the seabed. Seaweed feed through the spores on their leaves.

In Famine times, those potato crops that were fertilised with seaweed had no problems with potato blight, a fungus that affected Irish potato crops and led to the Great Famine in the mid-19th century.

In 1959, there was an outbreak of the food & mouth disease in Europe, and it affected many animals which died as a consequence. Only those that had been fed on a diet that in parts contained seaweed survived unscathed (as per the Report of the Agricultural Engineer, M.G. de CROUTTE (Bulletin of Sittings, vol. 45, no. 12 – Sittings of 17 and 24 June 1959). The reason for that is that seaweed contains some complicated forms of sugar the cell structure of which is very similar to those of viruses. So the virus “thinks” that the infected body is already saturated with its own destructive cells, and does not reproduce any longer.

Something similar happens when an extract in oil of a red seaweed called Dumontia is applied on cold sores. It stops the virus from growing, and after a while the virus just dies because it cannot reproduce any more.

Seaweed has been around for about 3 billion years now. It is something between an animal and a plant. Some seaweed kinds reproduce sexually through male and female reproductive cells by producing eggs and sperms. Others reproduce asexually by splitting from the main plant in a process called fragmentation or division. These are clones of the mother plant.