

# Health Advantages of Grade B Syrup

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## “Master Cleanser” Promotion

The popular press, some entertainment personalities, and some retailers advocate the health advantages of Grade B Pure Maple syrup, usually organic (see Newsweek, May 28, page 43). Grade B syrup also is promoted as one of the components of the “Master Cleanser,”<sup>1</sup> also known as the Lemonade or Maple Syrup diet, which is promoted as a way to “detoxify” your body and to lose weight.

## Health Benefits?

We are aware of no research done with suitable controls and sample size that supports unique health advantages of Grade B pure maple syrup. Stanley Burroughs, originator of the Master Cleanser, advocated end-of-season Grade B maple syrup because of its more intense flavor and higher mineral content. No data supported the assertion of higher mineral content. Analyses of the chemical composition of different maple syrups done by the Procter Center suggests that Grade B syrup will have similar health benefits as other syrup grades (see the North American Maple Syrup Producers Manual). Although it is possible that future research could support the marketing claims I have seen, the evidence that is being used to support these marketing claims is not scientifically valid.

There are possible health reasons to choose any pure maple syrup and sugar in comparison with more refined sugars. Pure Maple syrup is higher in mineral content, especially calcium, and contains low concentrations of a variety of anti-oxidants. Calcium and anti-oxidants have proven health advantages for most people based upon research with other food products. The mixture of sugars present in maple syrup is less likely to fuel metabolic pathways leading to fat than high fructose sugar is hypothesized to do. There is research underway in Quebec by Centre Acer examining the health advantages of pure maple syrup, but no results are yet available to support specific health claims.

Maple syrups from different producers, different times of year, and different years vary in chemical composition. No research has demonstrated any differential health benefits related to this variation. Syrups and sugar with higher antioxidant and mineral content may have advantages over those with lower concentrations. Unfortunately, the quantity of Pure Maple products consumed by most people is too small a part of the typical diet, even when used frequently, to argue for an important health advantage from consuming Pure Maple Syrup.

## “Master Cleanser” Process

The “Master Cleanser” regimen includes ingredients beyond Grade B Pure Maple syrup. Lemon juice, sea salt, cayenne pepper, laxative tea and mint tea are other parts of the regimen.

<sup>1</sup>Stanley Burroughs. 1976. The Master Cleanser. Self published



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Essentially this is a laxative process in which the role of maple syrup is as a sweetener and energy source to maintain metabolism during the process. Organic Grade B Pure Maple is usually recommended. However, the primary physiological functions in this regimen will be met by any grade of Pure Maple syrup.

I prefer Pure Maple products rather than more refined sugars. There may be health advantages, but the real benefits are flavor, supporting local businesses, and encouraging sustainable forestry.

