

PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS

THE WONDERS OF THIS
UNKNOWN FRUIT



PRICKLY PEAR

What is a nopal cactus?

Nopal cactus, also known as the prickly pear cactus, is found natively in the southwestern regions of the United States and in Mexico. The flat cactus pads can be eaten when the plant is young. When the cactus is older, it's too tough to eat. Nopal cactus is a common ingredient in foods in some regions of Mexico.

There are several ways to use nopal cactus, including in jellies and candies and as an aid to help harden plaster. There are also a number of medicinal uses, thanks to this cactus's varied health benefits.

1. It's an antiviral

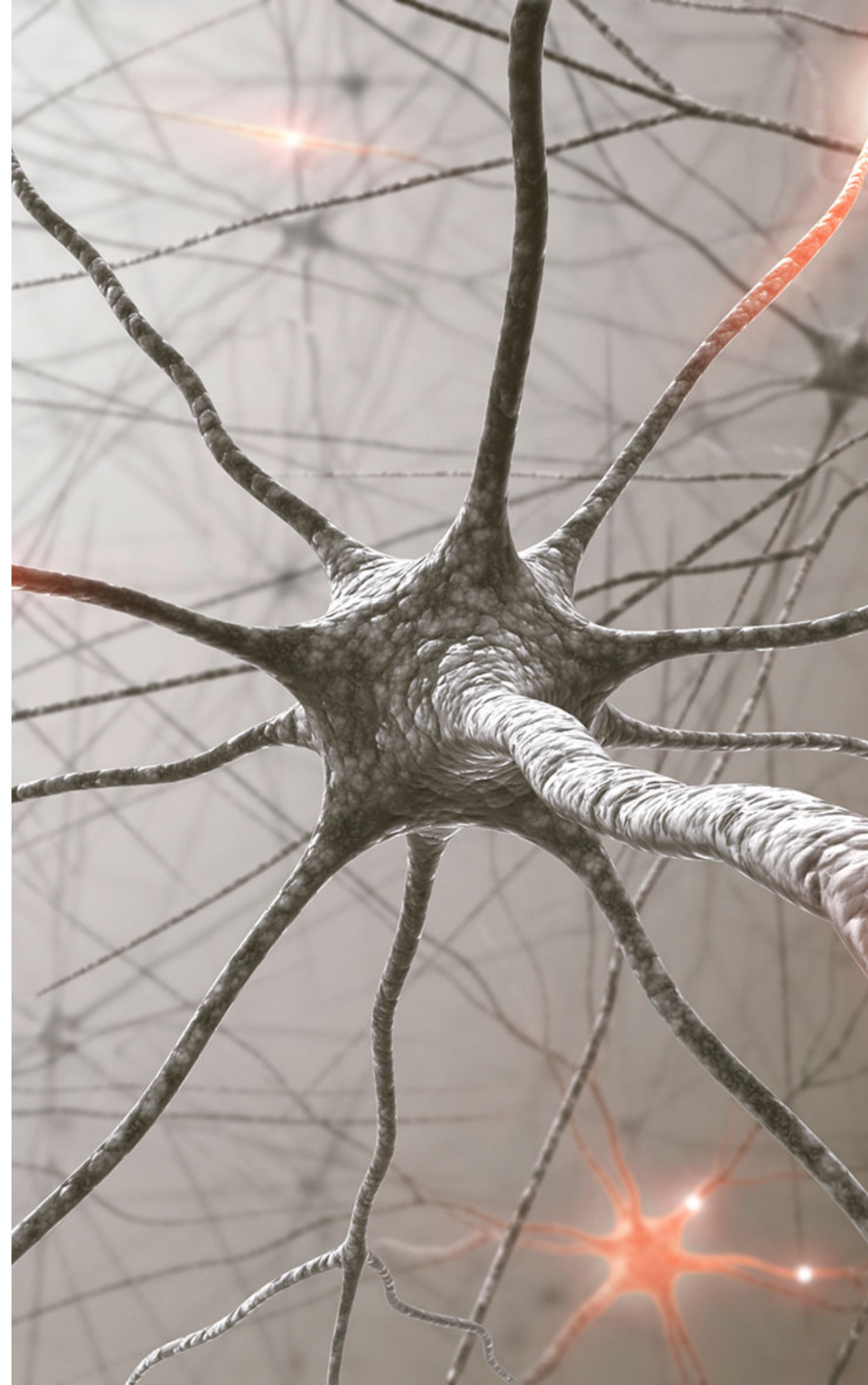
Prevention is the best line of defense for contracting a virus. Nopal cactus has antiviral properties, and some preliminary research has found that it has antiviral activity against herpes simplex virus (HSV), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and HIV.

2. It protects nerve cells

Nerve cells can be damaged like all other cells. This can lead to sensory loss or pain. Nopal cactus can protect against this damage. For instance, a 2014 study found that it contains neuroprotective properties. This can help prevent nerve cells from damage or loss of function.

3. It's high in antioxidants

Antioxidants can protect our cells from damage caused by free radicals. Nopal cactus is full of antioxidants, and a 2013 study found that the cactus is able to reduce oxidative stress. Antioxidants can benefit everyone, regardless of age and preexisting conditions.





4. It can regulate blood sugar levels

Regulating blood sugar can be a huge struggle for people with diabetes. Nopal cactus may provide a complementary solution. Some research indicates that nopal cactus can decrease and regular blood sugar. A 2012 study, for example, recommends taking nopal cactus together with other diabetes medications to help regulate blood sugar.

6. It may reduce cholesterol

An early study found evidence that nopal cactus was able to decrease cholesterol. While overall levels of cholesterol dropped, LDL cholesterol (or “bad” cholesterol) dropped significantly. Nopal cactus may be able to lower cholesterol with much fewer side effects than traditional cholesterol medications.

7. It can eliminate hangovers

Nopal cactus may actually help with the symptoms of hangovers. There’s a catch – it’s most effective when you take the cactus’s extract before you start drinking, preventing the problem instead of treating it later. A 2004 study found strong evidence that nopal cactus extract significantly reduces the severity of hangovers when taken before drinking.

5. It can treat enlarged prostate

An enlarged prostate can be an uncomfortable problem for men, resulting in a need to urinate more frequently. Early research has shown that nopal cactus may help to treat enlarged prostates and may even be effective in helping treat prostate cancer. Bonus: It may be able to do so with fewer side effects than traditional prescription medications.

