

WOUND HEALING ANTI-INFLAMMATORY CREAMS: A REVIEW

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Article Received: 04 April 2026 | Article Revised: 25 April 2026 | Article Accepted: 15 May 2026

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20444587>

How to cite this Article: Prof. Shital K. Datir, Prof. Swati N. Kakad, Sakshi A. Thombare, Pallavi B. Wahule, Sumit R. Mali (2026) WOUND HEALING ANTI-INFLAMMATORY CREAMS: A REVIEW. World Journal of Pharmaceutical Science and Research, 5(6), 325-327.



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ABSTRACT

Wound healing is a complex physiological process involving hemostasis, inflammation, proliferation, and remodeling. Anti-inflammatory creams, particularly those formulated with herbal extracts such as turmeric, neem, tulsi, aloe vera, and pipal, have demonstrated significant efficacy in accelerating wound closure, reducing infection, and minimizing scarring. This review explores the mechanisms, applications, preparation methods, and evaluation of wound-healing anti-inflammatory creams, with emphasis on polyherbal formulations and clinical evidence.

KEYWORDS: wound healing, anti-inflammatory cream, herbal formulation, turmeric, aloe vera, neem, tulsi, pipal.

INTRODUCTION

Wound healing is a dynamic process that restores tissue integrity through overlapping phases of hemostasis, inflammation, proliferation, and remodeling.^[1] The inflammatory phase is essential for clearing debris and pathogens, but excessive inflammation can delay healing and lead to chronic wounds.^[2] Anti-inflammatory creams are therefore critical in modulating cytokine activity, reducing edema, and promoting faster tissue repair.^[3]

Herbal therapy has emerged as a promising alternative due to its safety, affordability, and diverse biological activities.^[4] Plants such as turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), neem (*Azadirachta indica*), tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), aloe vera (*Aloe barbadensis*), and pipal (*Ficus religiosa*) contain phytoconstituents like flavonoids, tannins, alkaloids, and phenolic compounds that promote wound healing through antimicrobial, antioxidant, and tissue-regenerative properties.^[5]

Clinical trials have demonstrated aloe vera gel's effectiveness in reducing pain and inflammation in pressure ulcers compared to conventional dressings.^[6] Similarly, copper peptides such as GHK-Cu stimulate collagen synthesis and skin remodeling, further supporting wound repair.^[7] Polyherbal formulations combining these agents enhance therapeutic efficacy through synergism, offering faster wound contraction, reduced inflammation, and improved healing quality.^[8]

Stages Wound Healing

Wound healing occurs in four overlapping stages:

- **Hemostasis:** Immediate clot formation to stop bleeding.^[9]
- **Inflammation:** Recruitment of neutrophils and macrophages to clear pathogens and debris.^[10]
- **Proliferation:** Fibroblast activity, collagen deposition, and angiogenesis.^[11]
- **Remodeling:** Collagen maturation and scar formation.^[12]

Balanced cytokine regulation (IL-10, TNF- α , TGF- β) is crucial for successful healing.^[13]

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

- **Natural safety profile:** Herbal creams are generally well-tolerated with minimal side effects.^[14]
- **Multifunctional activity:** Provide antimicrobial, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory effects simultaneously.^[15]
- **Cost-effectiveness:** Affordable compared to synthetic drugs.^[16]
- **Synergistic action:** Polyherbal combinations enhance therapeutic efficacy.^[17]

Disadvantages

- **Variability in potency:** Quality depends on extraction methods and plant source.^[18]
- **Limited clinical trials:** Evidence is still emerging compared to synthetic drugs.^[19]
- **Risk of allergies:** Sensitive individuals may react to certain plant compounds.^[20]
- **Storage instability:** Some formulations may degrade over time.^[21]

Applications

- **Burn wounds:** Reduce pain, inflammation, and infection.^[22]
- **Diabetic ulcers:** Promote faster closure and prevent microbial growth.^[23]
- **Post-surgical wounds:** Minimize scarring and accelerate epithelialization.^[24]
- **Minor cuts and abrasions:** Provide quick relief and prevent secondary infections.^[25]

Method of Preparation

1. **Extraction of herbal components:** Using ethanol or aqueous solvents to obtain bioactive compounds.^[26]
2. **Cream base formulation:** Incorporating emulsifying agents, stabilizers, and humectants.^[27]
3. **Incorporation of extracts:** Mixing turmeric, neem, tulsi, aloe vera, and pipal extracts into the cream base.^[28]
4. **Homogenization:** Ensuring uniform distribution of active ingredients.^[29]
5. **Packaging:** Stored in sterile containers to maintain stability.^[30]

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