

Peppermint

Mentha piperita - Lamiaceae (Labiatae)

Native to the Mediterranean, peppermint grows to a height of 1 metre and like all the Labiates it has a square stem. The leaves are long and serrated and the flowers can be white or mauve. There are many types of cultivated mint, peppermint is the most commercially and medicinally important.

Place of Origin

China, USA, UK

Part of plant used

Method of Extraction

partially dried herb
steam distillation

Characteristics

Colour: Colourless - Pale yellow

Perfume notes: Top, middle

Yield

BF

TR

0.1-1%

1

C

Aroma

Chemical Composition

Monoterpenes	alpha-pinene	% 1-4	Ketones	menthone	% 17-31
Monoterpenols	menthol	30-45		pulegone	1
Oxides	linalool	0-2	Esters	menthyl acetate	2-10
	1,8 Cineole	5			

Properties:

Analgesic, antispasmodic, carminative, cephalic, cholagogue, cooling, expectorant, nervine, stomachic, antimicrobial emmenagogue, febrifuge

Precautions:

There have been reports of apnoea and collapse in infants following application of menthol to their nostrils * avoid use with children under 2 years

Mentholated cigarettes and sweets have been responsible for instances of cardiac fibrillation in patients prone to the condition *avoid use in cases of cardiac fibrillation

Menthol is a mild skin irritant, use low doses only

Avoid in pregnancy

Believed to antidote homeopathic remedies

***Mentha piperita* - Lamiaceae (Labiatae)**
Indications

Circulatory

Musculo-skeletal

Headaches, cramps, muscular aches & pains

Digestive

Colic, cramps, dyspepsia, flatulence, nausea, IBS

Nervous

mental fatigue, apathy, migraine, headaches, muddled thinking, neuralgia, poor concentration

Genito-Urinary / Gynaecological

Dysmenorrhoea, PMS, scanty periods

Respiratory

bronchitis, flu, sinusitis, cough, colds

Immune System

Skin

Sunburn, acne, skin irritation, ringworm

Clinical Research

It has long been known that peppermint oil benefits the Digestive system tract - in 1969 it was found to relax the lower oesophageal sphincter. In 1979 a report in the British Medical Journal showed that the oil reduced abdominal symptoms in IBS and peppermint oil is now licensed as a medicine for use in the treatment of this condition.

A 1995 study into the analgesic activity of peppermint oil in the treatment of headaches, demonstrated a significant pain relieving effect when the oil was applied to the forehead and temples.

A 1989 trial on patients with colostomies was run to evaluate the benefits to them of taking peppermint capsules: results showed the oil masked the faecal odour associated with colostomies and allowed the patients to accept their treatments more quickly.

Psychological uses

Peppermint clears the head and focuses the mind. It has an innately invigorating effect and care must be taken not to overuse it as this could lead to insomnia. It stimulates and awakens the nerves and brain, enhancing concentration and study and enabling the "digestion" of information and ideas.

Summary

Cephalic, digestive system tonic