What are the benefits of peppermint oil?



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What is it? Benefits Safety When to see a doctor Summary

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Peppermint oil comes from the peppermint plant, which is a hybrid of spearmint and water mint. People have used peppermint oil for centuries to treat a range of illnesses, including digestive conditions, colds, and headaches.

However, according to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH), scientists have only carried out a small amount of research into the effects of peppermint oil.

This article will look at the potential benefits of peppermint oil and how to use it safely.

Although research suggests that essential oils may have some health benefits, it is important to remember that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) do not monitor or regulate the purity or quality of these. A person should talk with their healthcare provider before using essential oils, and they should be sure to research the quality of a brand's products. A person should always do a patch test before trying a new essential oil.

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Peppermint oil derives from the peppermint plant, which is a hybrid of spearmint and water mint.

Peppermint oil comes from the leaves of the peppermint plant. It is an essential oil that contains over 40 different compounds, including menthol, which gives peppermint its refreshing qualities. It is a common essential oil around the world.

Peppermint oil is available in several forms, including:

- pure peppermint essential oil, which is highly concentrated
- peppermint extracts, which are much less concentrated
- enteric-coated capsules, which contain a small amount of peppermint oil in a special coating

Some people use peppermint essential oil in aromatherapy, applying diluted peppermint oil to the skin in a carrier oil or inhaling it through steam or a diffuser. Food and drink manufacturers also use very small amounts of peppermint extract to add flavor to products.

Pure peppermint essential oil is too concentrated to take orally, and it can be toxic at high doses. Although research has looked at the potential benefits of taking diluted amount of peppermint oil internally in enteric-

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Please always consult with a healthcare professional prior to any oral use of essential oils.

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In traditional herbalism, practitioners may use peppermint to:

- kill germs
- stop itching
- relieve pain
- prevent or reduce vomiting
- help the body eliminate mucus
- reduce muscle spasms
- reduce flatulence
- promote sweating
- boost blood circulation

However, scientists have not proven all of these benefits in human studies.

Here are the peppermint oil benefits that have the strongest scientific evidence behind them:

Reduces irritable bowel syndrome symptoms

Most of the research into peppermint oil has looked at its impact on digestive conditions, particularly irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

According to the NCCIH, there is some evidence to suggest that entericcoated, diluted peppermint oil can reduce the symptoms of IBS.

IBS is a chronic digestive condition that causes abdominal pain and frequent bouts of diarrhea, constipation, or both. A comprehensive review of studies from over a 50-year period found that enteric-coated peppermint capsules were a safe and effective treatment option for IBS pain.

Researchers [♥] believe that menthol, which is a component of peppermint

Relieves indigestion

A review article in the journal *Alimentary Pharmacology and*Therapeutics found that a combination of enteric-coated peppermint oil and caraway oil could reduce indigestion in adults when compared with a placebo.

However, it is worth noting that peppermint oil can also cause heartburn and acid reflux. It is best to discuss persistent indigestion with a healthcare professional.

Eases nausea

The NCCIH say that there is not enough evidence to prove that peppermint oil can reduce nausea.

However, a 2020 randomized clinical trial found that inhaling peppermint oil vapor through a nebulizer reduced the frequency, duration, and severity of nausea and vomiting in people recovering from heart surgery.

Another study found that inhaling peppermint essential oil did not have a significant effect on nausea and vomiting among pregnant people with morning sickness. This seems to suggest that peppermint oil aromatherapy can work for some causes of nausea but not others.

People should not take pure essential oils orally to treat nausea.

Peppermint essential oil is available for purchase online.

Other possible benefits

A few studies suggest that peppermint oil may help with other things, such as:

 Viruses: A 2020 review noted that peppermint has antiviral activity against viruses such as the herpes simplex viruses and influenza ADVERTISEMENT

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bacteria — including *Salmonella, Escherichia coli,* and *Staphylococcus aureus* — in laboratory tests.

- Chronic itching: A 2016 study [©] suggests that peppermint oil may provide safe and effective relief from chronic itching.
- Athletic performance: A small 2014 study [♥] in 30 students suggests that peppermint oil may improve several measurements of athletic performance, such as jumping ability or grip strength.

However, many of these studies are small or only demonstrate peppermint's properties in a laboratory setting. For this reason, scientists will need to carry out more research to determine whether or not peppermint oil can safely and effectively treat other conditions in humans.

How to use peppermint oil safely

Enteric-coated peppermint oil appears to be safe to take internally at safe doses. However, healthcare professionals do not recommend ingesting essential oils. Pure essential oils are highly concentrated and can be toxic.

Menthol can cause serious side effects in children, so parents and caregivers should not apply peppermint oil to a child's skin or allow them to inhale or ingest it.

During pregnancy and breastfeeding, it is important to consult a doctor before using essential oils. Consider who else is in the area when using aromatherapy. Some oils are also dangerous for pets.

People who want to use peppermint essential oil for pain, headaches, or itching can apply the oil to the skin by diluting it in another substance. To do this, add a few drops of peppermint oil to a carrier oil, such as jojoba or coconut oil, to prevent skin irritation.

To inhale peppermint oil, add only a few drops to a bowl of steaming water or dilute it in a carrier oil before adding to a bath. If using a diffuser, follow the device's instructions to get the right ratio of oil to water.

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When to see a doctor

Peppermint oil can cause skin irritation, digestive symptoms, and, in some cases, allergic reactions. If a person develops symptoms while using peppermint oil, they should stop using it immediately and speak to a doctor.

Anyone with persistent symptoms that may indicate an underlying health condition should also speak to a doctor before trying peppermint oil. A doctor will be able to diagnose the problem and determine whether or not peppermint oil is likely to help.

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