Peppermint

(*Mentha piperita*)
Stock #3910-9 (5 ml.)

The aroma of peppermint oil is extremely refreshing, with the ability to clear the head, increase mental clarity and alertness, and sharpen the senses. Peppermint oil is also beneficial for reviving individuals following episodes of dizziness, fainting, nausea or even shock. Psychologically, peppermint can lift one's mood out of a state of boredom or emotional fatigue.[1-3]

Peppermint oil's analgesic (pain-relieving) and antispasmodic properties help relieve headache and sinus pain, muscle aches, neuralgia, toothache, and menstrual discomfort. Peppermint oil's analgesic effects may also be helpful for relieving the pain associated with rheumatoid arthritis.[4]

Applied topically, peppermint oil causes local blood vessels to dilate, which produces a cooling effect that is beneficial for bringing down a fever, treating sunburn, or easing hot flashes. Animal studies have shown that the topical application of 1-2 drops of peppermint oil directly on the temples produces this cooling effect by altering calcium channels of the body's cold receptors. Animal studies have also confirmed that peppermint oil is responsible for restricting serotonin and substance P (neurotransmitters that carry pain messages to the brain) in smooth muscle contraction, and for increasing circulation in the skin.[1,4,5]

German scientists took this research a step further by conducting a randomized double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical study to determine the effects of essential oils for relieving headaches. Study results showed that when a peppermint and eucalyptus oil preparation was applied topically to large areas of the forehead and temples, it increased cognitive performance and produced a muscle-relaxing and mentally relaxing effect. However, when researchers applied a preparation of peppermint oil alone, it provided significant analgesic effects, causing the greatest decrease in the participants' sensitivity to headache pain. Incidentally, both essential oils are well-recognized transmitters in the trigemino-vascular system, which is the leading structure in the generation of primary headaches.[6-8]

A follow-up study to determine the effects of topical application on different types of experimentally-induced headache pain (ischemically-induced headache, thermal pain induction, experimentally-induced pain, etc.) again confirmed that peppermint oil provides significant analgesic effects. Researchers concluded that topical use of peppermint and eucalyptus oils may prove to be an effective and simple alternative therapy for the treatment of headaches, and one that is free of the potential side-effects associated with analgesics such as acetaminophen and aspirin.[8,9]

Peppermint oil is an antiseptic and decongestant, especially effective as an inhalant for respiratory conditions, including colds, flu and general malaise.[1]

Researchers in India have confirmed that peppermint essential oil acts as a bactericide against *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) strain SP-11. A follow-up study of broader scope determined that peppermint oil is also effective as an antibacterial and antifungal against at least 22 Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria and 11 yeast-like and filamentous fungi in vitro. In fact, peppermint oil was found to be among the most potent of botanical oils tested against anaerobic oral bacterial. Furthermore, a peppermint oil preparation was tested in vitro against headlice (*Pediculus humanus capitis*) and found to be an effective treatment.[10-13]

According to recent research, the essential oils of *Mentha piperita, Citrus limon*, and *Eucalyptus globulus* have been analyzed and found to be effective antibacterial agents against methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). This antibiotic-resistant strain has been responsible for the rapid spread of infectious outbreaks around the world. In fact, a mutated form of MRSA was determined as the cause of the "flesh-eating bug" of 1994.[4]

Researchers from Minia University in Egypt tested various essential oils to determine their inhibitory effects on dermatophytic fungi—any of several fungi that cause parasitic skin disease in humans. Results showed that clove and peppermint oils provided strong fungistatic effects, seriously inhibiting the growth of tested fungi. Such impressive results prompted researchers to suggest adding clove and peppermint oils in antidermatophytic drugs.[14]

According to an article published in the *International Journal of Aromatherapy*, essential oils are used to enhance the quality of life of Alzheimer's patients. For example, the essential oils of geranium and lavender are used to trigger memories of cooking and plants, while eucalyptus, peppermint and pine oils are used to stimulate conversation and overall memory.[4]

Inhaling peppermint (*Mentha piperita*) oil may help reduce nausea associated with chemotherapy and radiation

treatments. Inhaling the scent of peppermint essential oil has also been shown to reduce peripheral blood pressure.[4,5]

Peppermint oil is contraindicated for individuals with epilepsy or insomnia, and should not be used topically on children under 3 years of age. Peppermint oil should also be applied sparingly on those with sensitive skin, in order to avoid minor skin irritation. Furthermore, since peppermint oil promotes menstruation and reduces lactation, its use is best avoided during the first trimester of pregnancy and while nursing.[2-4,15]

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