

MINT AND ITS HEALTH BENEFITS



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Mint is a popular herb that can be used fresh or dried in many dishes and infusions. Mint oil is often used in toothpaste, gum, candy, and beauty products. The mentha, or mint, family refers to a group of around 15 to 20 plant species, including peppermint and spearmint.

Mint has one of the highest antioxidant capacities of any food. Learning how to use fresh herbs and spices such as mint to add flavor when cooking can also help to cut down on sodium intake.

MINT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE A NUMBER OF HEALTH BENEFITS:

ALLERGIES

Mint plants contain an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent called rosmarinic acid. This has been studied for its effectiveness in relieving seasonal allergy symptoms, revealing a promising natural treatment.

BREAST-FEEDING

Breast-feeding offers significant benefits for both infant and parent, but it can cause pain and damage to the nipple. A study published in April 2007 in the International Breastfeeding Journal suggested that peppermint water may help prevent nipple cracks and nipple pain in first-time mothers who are breastfeeding.

COMMON COLD

Mint contains menthol, a natural aromatic decongestant that helps to break up phlegm and mucus, making it easier to expel. Menthol also has a cooling effect and can help relieve a sore throat, especially when combined with tea.

INDIGESTION

Mint is a calming and soothing herb that has been used for thousands of years to aid with upset stomach or indigestion. Mint is thought to increase bile secretion and encourage bile flow, which helps to speed and ease digestion (and which may also support healthy cholesterol levels). Peppermint is also thought to relieve pain and discomfort from gas and bloating. Peppermint tea is a common home remedy for flatulence.

IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

The use of peppermint oil has been found to be an effective and safe treatment for those suffering from abdominal pain or discomfort associated with IBS. Enteric-coated capsules are most effective and prevent the capsule from dissolving in the stomach, which could cause heartburn.

GASTRIC ULCERS:

In a study in animals, menthol was found to help protect the lining of the stomach from the negative effects of indomethacin and ethanol, giving it a potential role in preventing gastric ulcers associated with alcohol consumption and regular use of painkillers

PAIN RELIEF

Applying peppermint extract externally has been found to increase pain threshold in humans. Part of the bushmint family (*Hyptis*), Brazilian mint (*Hyptis crenata*) has been found to be as effective for pain relief as a synthetic aspirin-style drug indomethacin when taken as a "tea."

SKIN

When applied topically in oil, ointment or lotion, mint has the effect of calming and cooling skin affected by insect bites, rash or other reactions.

ORAL HEALTH

Mint is a natural anti-microbial agent and breath freshener.

DIET

Adding mint is a great way to add flavor to a dish or beverage without adding excessive calories, sugar or sodium. Mint leaves are a tender herb (along with cilantro and basil), with gentle stems. They are best used raw or added at the end of cooking in order to maintain their delicate flavor and texture.

REFERENCES

1. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/275944.php>
2. <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/mint-benefits>