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## Benefits of Peppermint

**Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)** Peppermint oil capsules have been described as "the drug of first choice" in IBS patients, as it safely helps alleviate symptoms and improve quality of life. Research has shown that it is effective in children and adults alike, with one study showing a 50 percent reduction in "total irritable bowel syndrome score" among 75 percent of patients who tried it.

**Colonic Spasm and Gas** Peppermint oil is an effective alternative to drugs like Buscopan for reducing colonic spasms. It may also relax the muscles of your intestines, allowing gas to pass and easing abdominal pain. Try peppermint oil or leaves added to tea for gas relief.

**Upset Stomach and Indigestion** Supplementing with 90 milligrams (mg) of peppermint oil, along with caraway oil, "much or very much improved" symptoms of functional dyspepsia in 67 percent of patients. If you have an upset stomach, try drinking a small glass of water with a few drops of peppermint essential oil added.

**Hay Fever** Extracts from peppermint leaves may inhibit histamine release, which suggests it may help alleviate hay fever symptoms.

**Memory Problems** The aroma of peppermint has been shown to enhance memory and increase alertness.

**Dental Cavities and Bad Breath** Peppermint oil extract has been shown to be superior to the mouthwash chemical chlorhexidine in inhibiting the formation of biofilm formations linked to dental cavities. Powdered peppermint leaves have also been used historically to freshen breath and whiten teeth; you can even add a drop or two directly to your toothpaste.

**Respiratory Benefits** Peppermint oil acts as an expectorant and decongestant, and may help clear your respiratory tract. Use peppermint essential oil as a cold rub on your chest or inhale it through a vaporizer to help clear nasal congestion and relieve cough and cold symptoms.

**Headaches** Peppermint oil may help relieve tension headache pain. For headache pain, try dabbing a few drops on your wrist or sprinkling a few drops on a cloth, then inhaling the aroma. You can also massage the oil directly onto your temples and forehead.

**Stress** Peppermint oil is cooling and energizing. Add a few drops to your bath, or dab a few drops directly on your body then get into the tub, for near-instant stress relief. You can also put the oil into a burner for a stress-relieving aroma.

**Hair and Skin** Try blending peppermint oil into your massage oil, shampoo, body wash or body lotion. It has antiseptic and antibacterial properties that can help cool your skin and remove dandruff (and lice) from your scalp.

**Asthma** Peppermint contains rosmarinic acid (also found in rosemary), which may help to reduce inflammation-causing chemicals in people with asthma.

**Muscle Pain** Peppermint may help to relieve muscle spasms and pain. Try massaging its essential oil onto sore muscles or adding it to your bath water for muscle pain relief.

**Radiation Damage** Peppermint may protect against DNA damage and cell death caused by radiation exposure.