



Peppermint - <i>Mentha piperita</i>	
Description	The peppermint plant is a hybrid of spearmint and water mint. Its active ingredient is a volatile oil made up of more than 40 components.
Traditional Use	Peppermint is primarily used for indigestion relief. It is also used as an inhalant, for clearing congestion in coughs and colds. Peppermint soothes the digestive tract, helps relieve nausea, and sweetens breath.
Commercial Availability & Dosage	Peppermint can be found in its essential oil form (not to be taken internally), as a tea, or as enteric coated capsules containing 0.2ml oil. Dosage: Drink up to 4 cups of peppermint tea per day; put 2 drops of peppermint oil in a steam bath and inhale; take up to 2 enteric coated capsules containing 0.2ml oil daily.
Precautions / Contra-Indications	Peppermint oil acts as a relaxant on the muscles of the stomach and gastro-intestinal tract, and can aggravate acid reflux or the symptoms of hiatus hernia. Do not put peppermint oil on the nostrils or chests of children under 5 years old. Never use peppermint oil neat.
Pregnancy & Breastfeeding¹	External use is suitable during pregnancy. However peppermint is not recommended to be taken internally during pregnancy, unless as a tea.
Adverse Effects¹	When taken as a tea, peppermint is usually considered safe, although hypersensitivity reactions have been reported. Rare negative reactions to enteric-coated peppermint oil capsules may include skin rash, heartburn, slowed heartbeat, and muscle tremors. Menthol or peppermint oil applied topically could cause contact dermatitis or rash.
Interactions¹	No significant interactions reported.
References	1. Braun & Cohen. Herbs and Natural Supplements: An evidence-based guide. Churchill Livingstone, 2005.