

[IMAGE]

## Peppermint Does More Than Freshen Breath

By Editorial Staff

Everyone knows peppermint does wonders to make your breath "kissing sweet," according to the famous advertising slogan. However, it may do more than that. According to Benjamin Kligler, MD, MPH, from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and Sapna Chaudhary, DO, from the Beth Israel Continuum Center for Health and Healing in New York, "The medicinal use of peppermint and other mint plants probably dates back to the herbal pharmacopoeia of ancient Greece, where peppermint leaf traditionally was used internally as a digestive aid and for management of gallbladder disease; it also was used in inhaled form for upper respiratory symptoms and cough."

The researchers' latest findings, published in the journal *American Family Physician*, suggest peppermint oil is effective in relieving digestive symptoms, particularly symptoms related to irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and also helps reduce tension headaches. That's great news, although the researchers caution against use in very young children, at least in certain situations. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark

"Peppermint oil should not be used internally or on or near the face in infants and young children because of its potential to cause bronchospasm, tongue spasms, and, possibly respiratory arrest. However, the amount of peppermint in over-the-counter medications, topical preparations and herbal teas is likely safe in pregnant and lactating women and in young children."

The recommended dosage is 0.2 to 0.4 mL of peppermint oil three times daily in enteric-coated capsules for adults, and 0.1 to 0.2 mL of peppermint oil three times daily for children older than 8 years of age. Check your local health food stores for peppermint oil capsules. The average cost is approximately \$24 to \$32 for a one-month supply. Of course, always talk to your doctor about appropriate use and dosing.

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