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Uses of Mint – A Review

**Suguna. M^{1*}, Kavitha. S², Manjula. V³, Dineshraman. G⁴,
Aravinda Senbagaraman. R⁵, Priyadharshini. S⁶, Subaraj. S⁷**

^{1*}Assistant Professor, National Institute of Siddha, Chennai

²Medical officer, National Institute of Siddha, Chennai

³Assistant Professor, Nandha Siddha College, Erode.

⁴Assistant Professor, JSA Siddha Medical College, Kallakurichi

⁵Medical officer, National Institute of Siddha, Chennai

⁶Medical officer, National Institute of Siddha, Chennai

⁷Emergency Medical officer, National Institute of Siddha, Chennai

Corresponding Author: Dr. M. Suguna

Mail id: drsugu.26@gmail.com

Introduction

Mint

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Botanical Name | : <i>Mentha arvensis</i> (B.N.) |
| English | : The Marsh Mint |
| Tel | : Pudina |
| Mal | : Putiyina |
| Kan | : Chtni, maragu |
| Sans | : Pudina |
| Arab | : Naanasul –hind |
| Hind | : Pudina |
| Family | : Labiatae. |

Food Value per 100 g. approximately

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Carbohydrates | 8.49 g |
| Protein | 5.90 g |
| Fat | 0.70 g |
| Calcium | 440 mg |
| Phosphorus | 70 mg |
| Iron | 19.2 mg |
| Vitamin A | 6,101 I.U. |
| Vitamin B ₁ | 59 mg |
| Vitamin B ₂ | 81 mg |
| Niacin | 0.4 mg |
| Oxalic Acid | 3.8 mg |
| Calories | 56 |

Physiopharmacology and Therapeutics

Mint is a very aromatic herb that is common all over India. It is generally used as a carminative and anti-spasmodic herb in the preparation of chutney and curries. Salad prepared with tomatoes, onions, cucumber, fresh lime juice, malt vinegar, table salt, (a green Chilly if desired) dressed with fresh mint and coriander leaves is a food-medicine if used daily. It kills the harmful germs contaminated in the food, eases digestion, and supplies all the necessary fresh natural vitamins, minerals, enzymes. It removes the unwanted chemicals from the blood by increasing urinary output and helps one to live long. This salad is a boon during cholera epidemics and prevents the infection. It is tested that cholera germs will never thrive in the presence of menthol, camphor, steriophin, potassium etc.. that are contained in this salad. Application of fresh mint juice over face every night, cures pimples, and prevents from dryness of the skin. Juice is also applied over insect stings, eczema, scabies, contact dermatitis etc. Snuffing the powder of the dry leaves cures chronic rhinitis, bleeding from the nose, loss of smelling power etc.

Menthol oil or (*Oleum mentha pip* B.P.C.)

Menthol oil or peppermint oil is distilled from the fresh leaves of *M. piperata* (black variety) during the flowering time. The oil distilled from white variety is more aromatic than the oil distilled from

the black variety but it yields less oil. Menthol oil is colourless but sometimes it becomes yellowish pale or greenish yellow when it is recently distilled. It becomes darker and thicker as it becomes old. If menthol oil is cooled to a low temperature and few crystals of menthol are added in it separation of menthol occurs quickly. The specific gravity of menthol oil is 0.9000 to 0.920 at 45". It is soluble in alcohol 70 per cent (2:1).

Chemical Composition

The chief chemical composition of peppermint oil is Menthol, menthyl acetate cineol, inactive pinene, l-limonene, cadinene, phellandrene, acetic aldehyde and acid, isoleveric aldehyde and acid, amyl alcohol, and demethylsulphide. The English oil contains more menthol (60 to 70 per cent).

Medicinal Uses

Peppermint oil 1 to 3 drops on a lump of sugar is used as a carminative, aromatic stimulant in flatulent colic, indigestion etc. It acts as a sedative on the stomach and relieves distension.

Fresh leaf juice of mint mixed with a teaspoonful of lime juice and honey is given thrice daily with excellent results in the treatment of indigestion, biliousness, flatulent colic, thread worms, morning sickness, iron deficiency

anaemias, summer diarrhoea etc. An ounce of mint tea is given thrice daily as a home-remedy for hiccough, colic, indigestion and colds. Giving mint tea for four days earlier of the expected menstrual time cures spasmodic dysmenorrhoea in young girls. Gargling fresh mint decoction with salt cures hoarseness due to shouting or singing loudly. It keeps the voice clear if used before singing. Therefore, it is a boon to singers and orators. A teaspoonful of fresh mint juice mixed with 2 teaspoonfuls of pure malt vinegar and equal quantity of honey stirred in 4 ounces of carrot juice is given thrice daily as a medicated- tonic during the treatment of tuberculosis, asthma, bronchitis. It liquifies the sputum, nourishes the lungs, increases body resistance against infection and prevents the harmful effects of antitubercular drugs. It prevents the asthmatic attacks by its secrolytic action and reduces congestion in air passages. Chewing few fresh leaves of mint daily is a nature's own antiseptic dentifrice. The chlorophyll combined with other antiseptic chemicals in the mint, kills all the harmful odour causing germs. It strengthens the gums by nourishing the required nutrients and thus prevents tooth decay. Pyorrhoea, pre-mature fall of the teeth etc. It also keeps the mouth flower fresh and increases the sense of taste in the tongue.

Uses of Menthol oil

Application of menthol oil 2 drops in a teaspoon of coconut oil, over painful joints and dislocations alleviates pain and cures inflammation due to its local anaesthetic and rubificent effect. Being antiseptic, it is applied as throat paint mixed with honey in diphtheria, tonsillitis, and relaxed throat. The oil mixed with equal quantity of clove oil is put incaried tooth to relieve pain. Its application with lime juice over the exposed parts prevents mosquito bite because it acts as a mosquito repellent.

Menthol (Peppermint-ka-phool)

In 1829 A.D. a chemist by name Gmelin explained the method of the preparation of

Menthol from mint. Dr. Perera in 1862 A.D. used China menthol as an analgesic. Dr. A. Dincken wrote about the antiseptic effects of menthol in 1879 A.D. Later, Dr. Rosenberg in 1885 A.D. prepared a nasal spray with menthol: ether and alcohol, which is being used even today as a local anaesthetic. Menthol is prepared by freezing peppermint oil and the colourless, acicular or prismatic stick like crystals are separated from the oil. Menthol crystals are brittle, having a strong peculiar smell of peppermint. If a crystal is put on the tongue, it creates a warm aromatic taste followed by a sensation of cold on drawing air into the mouth. Its chemical formula is $C_{10}H_{18}O$. It melts at 43° and its specific gravity is 0.890. If menthol is exposed to air, it evaporates. It liquifies when it is mixed with crystals of Thymol and Camphor. It is insoluble in water and glycerine, but dissolves in alcohol, Chloroform, Olive oil, petrol, liquid paraffin and in etherial oils.

Internal uses of Menthol Mixture

Menthol mixture 4 to 6 drops (adults) and 1 to 2 drops children (above 4 years) along with a teaspoonful of lime-juice or is to one teaspoonful of malt vinegar given 3 to 4 times daily is a specific medicine for indigestion, flatulent colic, diarrhoea, bacillary dysentery, vomiting, food poisoning, in early stages of Cholera. It can be given to prevent and expel thread worms. All these medicinal properties are attributable to the antiseptic and local anesthetic effects of the ingredients used in menthol mixture. The patent Balms like, Wintageno, Amruthanjan Nopin, Vicks vapour rub etc.. contain these chemicals in different proportions.

Conclusion

Since ancient times, herbs have fascinated the scientific attention of the biotechnology, cosmetic, pharmaceutical, and food industries and subsequently used for many purposes such as medicinal, flavouring, beverages, dyeing, fragrances and other industrial practices.

Concerning to well-being prosperities of peppermint, it can be stated the peppermint herb has enormous capabilities to handle human ailments, besides it has a great career in global trade.

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