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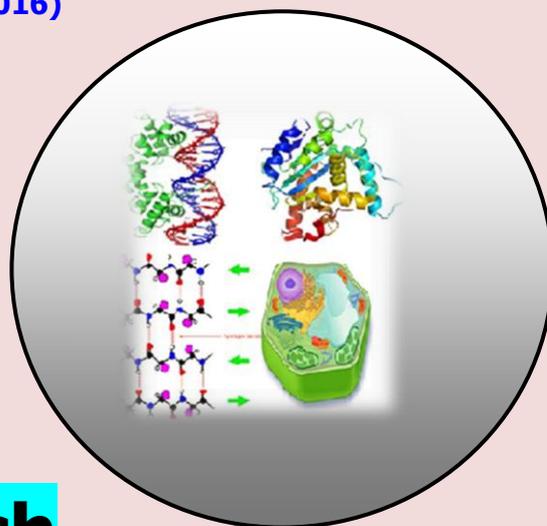
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Lavender Oil's Multifaceted Usage

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ABSTRACT

The most important health benefits of lavender include its ability to relieve stress, improve mood, promote restful sleep, lower skin irritation, prevent infections, reduce inflammation, eliminate dandruff, and soothe stomach bloating. The reason that it is so widely used is its massive range of applications, from food and fragrance to cosmetics and herbal medicines; this plant is full of essential oils (Lavender (Lavandula angustifolia) has a scent that's a wonderful blend of fresh, floral, clean, and calm. It's this dynamic aroma that has made the flower a classic for perfumes, soaps, fresheners, and beauty products. As one of most popular products, Lavender oil is great beginner oil and a must for every home. Lavender essential oil isn't just a favorite because of its classic scent—it's also highly versatile. From skin care products to relaxing routines, this oil can infuse many areas of your life) that can have powerful effects on the human body and has the most unique and beloved scents in the world. According to dermatologists and aromatherapists, lavender essential oil is one of the most beneficial oils in the treatment of acne, which is a very uncomfortable and embarrassing condition that primarily affects young people as they move through puberty, but can also afflict adults. It is characterized by red, raised sores on the face and body that develop due to a bacterial infection near the sebum gland. When sebum cannot be properly secreted from the sebum glands on the face, it begins to build up, particularly because puberty stimulates extra sebum and bacteria feed off of it, creating a vicious cycle of irritation, infection, and visible sores that can result in serious scarring. Lavender essential oil inhibits the bacteria that cause the initial infection, helps to regulate some of the over-excretion of sebum by hormonal manipulation and can reduce the signs of scarring after the acne has begun to heal. Adding a small amount of lavender essential oil to other skin creams or ointments can greatly increase the potential for relief and healing. Lavender essential oil is known as an excellent remedy for various types of pains including those caused by sore and tense muscles, muscular aches, rheumatism, sprains, backache, and lumbago.

A regular massage with lavender oil can provide relief from pain in the joints. A study done on postoperative pain relief showed that combining lavender essential oil vapor into the oxygen significantly reduced the amount of pain experienced, versus those patients who were only revived with oxygen after a major surgery. Lavender essential oil is good for urinary disorders because of its stimulating effect on urine production. Furthermore, it helps in restoring hormonal balance and reducing cystitis or inflammation of the urinary bladder. It also reduces associated cramps with these and other disorders.
Keywords: Essential oil, Antioxidant, Stress, Insomnia, Glutathione and SOD.

INTRODUCTION

Nearly forty plants with the mint family are technically classified as lavender, although the most common form is *Lavandula angustifolia*, on which the color “lavender” is based. This genus is found in Europe, Africa, the Mediterranean, and parts of Asia. The scent and flavor of lavender are wonderful, but the bonus comes from its wide range of health benefits.

There are a number of methods of using lavender to soothe anxiety and stress. The natural organic compounds in its leaves and flowers can be ground between the fingers and then rubbed onto the temples. This topical application can soothe the body and mind by relieving anxious thoughts and balancing the mood. Apart from this topical application, you can also brew lavender tea and achieve much the same effect. The antioxidant components in it can impact the endocrine system to lower the levels of stress hormones in the body.

If you regularly struggle with insomnia, apnea or restless sleep patterns, it can negatively impact your life. By brewing a few lavender flowers in hot water, you can steep a wonderful tea that has been used to induce sleep and relaxation for thousands of years.



This is closely linked to the flower’s impact on the nervous system, and can also help clear your mind of negative thoughts. It is commonly used in meditation techniques and its essential oils are used in aromatherapy (Moon et al., 2006).

Everyone is looking for a reliable way to relax the body and mind, and lavender takes care of both. If you add these flowers to your bathwater and take a nice long soak, the anti-inflammatory components can help in reducing the inflammation. The antioxidant properties of lavender are also quite potent and it is one of the most trusted applications of its flowers. An easy, mobile way to always take care of your skin is to fill a spray bottle with lavender flowers. When your skin is feeling dry or irritated, simply spray some of the infused water on the area and enjoy the quick relief that it provides. This can also work for chronic conditions like psoriasis, eczema, and acne.

Although many people turn to lavender for relaxation and aromatherapeutic applications, its effect on treating infection is impressive, to say the least. Many people apply crushed leaves on wounds and injuries for quick healing of the wounds as well as to prevent the development of infections on them.

The relaxing qualities of lavender, which come from its organic compounds and antioxidants, also help the heart by reducing blood pressure and easing the tension on blood vessels. This can prevent atherosclerosis and other cardiovascular problems, thereby lowering the risk of stroke and heart attack. The polyphenols found in lavender have a wide range of effects on the body. It can prevent the development of harmful bacteria and accumulation of gas in the gut. This will ease stomach discomfort, reduce bloating, and eliminate cramping. Chewing on its leaves or drinking its tea can be effective too (Inouye et al., 2001).

Lavender essential oil is the most used essential oil in the world today, but the benefits of lavender were actually discovered over 2,500 years ago. Because of its powerful antioxidant, antimicrobial, sedative, calming and anti-depressive properties, lavender oil benefits abound and it's been used both cosmetically and therapeutically for centuries. The Egyptians used lavender for mummification and as a perfume. In fact, when King Tut's tomb was opened in 1923, there was said to be a faint scent of lavender that could still be detected after 3,000 years. Early and modern aromatherapy texts advocate for lavender's use as an antibacterial essential oil. The leaves and stems of the plant were used to prepare decoctions against digestive system diseases and rheumatism, and lavender was valued for its cosmetic purposes. The Romans used lavender oil for bathing, cooking and purifying the air. And in the Bible, lavender oil was among the aromatics used for anointing and healing.

Today, lavender oil benefits for your body include the following:

Reduce anxiety and emotional stress; Protect against diabetes symptoms; Improve brain function; Help to heal burns and wounds; Improve sleep; Restore skin complexion and reduce acne; Slow aging with powerful antioxidants; Relieve pain; Alleviate headaches

Because lavender oil contains such versatile properties and is gentle enough to apply directly to the skin, I consider it must-have oil, especially if you are just getting started with using essential oils for your health. Science has only recently started to evaluate the range of health benefits that lavender essential oil contains, but there's already an abundance of evidence that points out the amazing capabilities of this oil. Today, lavender is one of the most popular essential oils in the world and for good reason. People are beginning to catch on to lavender oil benefits, for your body as well as your home (Hajhashemi et al., 2003).



LAVENDER OIL BENEFITS AND STUDIES

Lavender oil is extracted mostly from the flowers of the lavender plant, primarily through steam distillation. The flowers of lavender are fragrant in nature and have been used for making potpourri for centuries. Traditionally, lavender essential oil has also been used in making perfumes. The oil is very useful in aromatherapy and many aromatic preparations and combinations.

Lavender oil blends well with many other essential oils including cedarwood, pine, clary sage, geranium, and nutmeg. Today, lavender essential oil is frequently used in various forms including as aromatherapy oil, in gels, infusions, lotions, and soaps. The smell of lavender essential oil is potent for many types of bugs like mosquitoes, midges, and moths. Apply some lavender oil on the exposed skin when outside to prevent these irritating bites. Furthermore, if you do happen to be bitten by one of those bugs, lavender essential oil has anti-inflammatory qualities that will reduce the irritation and the pain associated with bug bites. Lavender essential oil induces sleep and is thus used as an alternative treatment for insomnia. Some of the health benefits are mentioned below.

1. Antioxidant Protection

Free radicals, like toxins, chemicals and pollutants, are arguably the most dangerous and most common risk factor for every disease that affects Americans today. Free radicals are responsible for shutting down your immune system and can cause unbelievable damage to your body. The body's natural response to free radical damage is to create antioxidant enzymes — especially glutathione, catalase and superoxide dismutase (SOD) — that prevent these free radicals from doing their damage. Unfortunately, your body can actually become deficient in antioxidants if the free radical burden is great enough, which has become relatively common in the U.S. because of poor diet and high exposure to toxins.

Thankfully, lavender essential oil is a natural antioxidant that works to prevent and reverse disease. A 2013 study published in *Phytomedicine* found that lavender oil increased the activity of the body's most powerful antioxidants — glutathione, catalase and SOD. And more recent studies have indicated similar results, concluding that lavender has antioxidant activity and helps to prevent or reverse oxidative stress (Laget, 2005 and Umezu et al., 2006).



2. Diabetes Natural Treatment

In 2014, scientists from Tunisia set out to complete a fascinating task: to test the effects of lavender essential oil on blood sugar to see if it can help reverse diabetes naturally.

During the 15-day animal study, the results observed by researchers were absolutely amazing. In a nutshell, lavender essential oil treatment protected the body from the following diabetes symptoms (Kasper et al., 2010):

- Increased blood glucose (the hallmark of diabetes)
- Metabolic disorders (especially fat metabolism)
- Weight gain
- Liver and kidney antioxidant depletion
- Liver and kidney dysfunction
- Liver and kidney *lipoperoxidation* (when free radicals “steal” necessary fat molecules from cell membranes)

Although more research is needed to understand the full capacity of lavender oil for the prevention or reversal of diabetes, the results of this study are promising and indicate the therapeutic potential of lavender. To use lavender oil for diabetes, apply it topically to your neck and chest, diffuse it at home or supplement with it for the health benefits.

3. Improves Mood and Reduces Stress

In recent years, lavender oil has been put on a pedestal for its unique ability to protect against neurological damage. Traditionally, lavender has been used to treat neurological issues like migraines, stress, anxiety and depression, so it’s exciting to see that the research is finally catching up to history.

In 2013, an evidence-based study published by the *International Journal of Psychiatry in Clinical Practice* found that supplementing with 80 milligram capsules of lavender essential oil alleviates anxiety, sleep disturbance and depression. Additionally, in the study there were no adverse side effects, drug interactions or withdrawal symptoms from using lavender oil. Another study published in 2012 took 28 high-risk postpartum women and found that by diffusing lavender in their homes, they had a significant reduction of postnatal depression and reduced anxiety disorder after a four-week treatment plan of lavender aromatherapy. Lavender oil has also been shown to improve PTSD symptoms. 80 milligrams of lavender oil per day helped decrease depression by 33 percent and dramatically decrease sleep disturbances, moodiness, and overall health status in 47 people suffering from PTSD. To relieve stress and improve sleep, put a diffuser by your bed and diffuse oils while you sleep at night or in the family room while you’re reading or winding down in the evening. You can also apply lavender oil topically behind your ears for the same benefits.

4. Supports Brain Function

The neurological benefits of lavender essential oil don’t stop at its ability to treat depression and boost mood. Research also shows that lavender oil serves as a natural treatment for Alzheimer’s disease! Studies conducted on rats show that inhaling lavender essential oil vapor can help to prevent brain oxidative stress and improve cognitive impairment. Also in 2012, the Swiss journal *Molecules* printed the results of a study that shockingly proved that lavender oil is a viable treatment option for neurological dysfunctions such as stroke.

Researchers believe that lavender’s neuroprotective effects are due to its antioxidant properties. To support the nervous system with lavender oil, diffuse it at home, inhale it directly from the bottle or apply it topically to the temples and back of neck.

COSMATIC AND CULINARY USES

It is used in salad dressings, honey, sauces, beverages, various teas, and as a flavoring spice for a number of cultural dishes. Lavender essential oil is highly sought after and widely available. If you suffer from hair loss or any other condition that affects the quality of your hair, seek out a lavender-based shampoo. However, some of the organic cosmetic products can be quite expensive, while others which claim to be derived from it may still contain harsh chemicals. You can steep lavender flowers like a tea and then apply the mixture to your hair. This will function as an effective shampoo and significantly boost the health of your follicle beds and hair.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Frequent studies on elderly patients have shown an increase in their sleep regularity when their normal sleep medication is replaced with some lavender essential oil being placed on their pillows. It has a relaxing impact on people; thereby, it often replaces modern medicines for sleep issues. Lavender essential oil has a calming scent which makes it an excellent tonic for the nerves and anxiety issues. Therefore, it can also be helpful in treating migraines, headaches, depression, nervous tension and emotional stress. The refreshing aroma removes nervous exhaustion and restlessness while also increasing mental activity. It has a well-researched impact on the autonomic nervous system, which is why it is frequently used as a treatment for insomnia and also as a way to regulate heart-rate variability. One study showed that people taking tests showed a significant decrease in mental stress and anxiety, as well as increased cognitive function when they inhaled lavender oil and rosemary oil before taking the test. Lavender oil is widely used for various respiratory problems including throat infection, flu, cough, cold, asthma, sinus congestion, bronchitis, whooping cough, laryngitis, and tonsillitis. The oil is either used in the form of vapor or is applied to the skin of neck, chest, and back. It is also added to many vaporizers and inhalers that are commonly used for cold and cough. The stimulating nature of lavender essential oil can also loosen up the phlegm and relieve congestion associated with respiratory conditions, thus speeding up the recovery process and helping the body naturally eliminate phlegm and other unwanted material. The vapor of lavender essential oil also has antibacterial qualities which can battle respiratory tract infections. Lavender essential oil is useful for hair care because it has been shown to be very effective on lice, lice eggs, and nits. Furthermore, lavender essential oil has also been shown to be very helpful in the treatment of hair loss, particularly for patients who suffer from alopecia, an autoimmune disease where the body rejects its own hair follicles. A Scottish study reported that more than 40% of alopecia patients in the study reported an increase in hair growth when they regularly rubbed lavender essential oil into their scalp. Therefore, lavender oil is sometimes recommended as a preventative measure for male pattern baldness. There is a significant research on the effects of lavender, in combination with other essential oils, as a way to prevent the occurrence of breast cancer in mice. This could be an indication of an increased chance of lavender battling carcinogenic effects and the presence of cancer.

Lavender essential oil is also good for improving circulation of blood in the body. Research suggests that aromatherapy using lavender oil has beneficial effects on coronary circulation. It also lowers blood pressure and is often used as a treatment for hypertension. This means that not only do the organs increase their levels of oxygenation, promoting muscle strength and health, but brain activity can have a noticeable boost, skin

remains bright and flushed with blood, and the body is protected from the risks of heart attack and atherosclerosis often associated with poor blood circulation. Lavender oil is useful for digestion because it increases the mobility of food within the intestine. The oil also stimulates the production of gastric juices and bile, thus aiding in the treatment of indigestion, stomach pain, colic, flatulence, vomiting, and diarrhea. Regular use of lavender essential oil provides resistance to a variety of diseases. Lavender has antibacterial and antiviral qualities that make it perfect for defending the body against rare diseases like TB, typhoid, and diphtheria, according to early research in the 20th century. It is used to treat various skin disorders such as acne, wrinkles, psoriasis, and other inflammatory conditions. It is commonly used to speed up the healing process of wounds, cuts, burns, and sunburns because it improves the formation of scar tissues. Lavender oil is also added to chamomile to treat eczema. Other health benefits of lavender essential oil include its ability to treat leucorrhoea. The oil can also be used to repel mosquitoes and moths, so you may find many mosquito repellents containing lavender oil as one of the primary ingredients.

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