LAVENDER’S HEALING PROPERTIES

A Natural Analgesic, Antidepressant, and Anti-inflammatory Agent

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This article describes the many therapeutic benefits of lavender for people with autoimmune and related conditions.

Herbal Properties

The herb lavender (Lavandula officinalis) originated in the Mediterranean basin. Because of its pleasant fragrance and medicinal benefits, people moving from the region frequently transplanted it to their new homelands. Today lavender is found worldwide, where it remains a mainstay in aromatherapy, flower remedies, and herbal medicine. A sturdy flowering perennial with a distinct woody scent, lavender is a welcome addition to any autoimmune disease healing protocol. Although the plant, flowers and seeds all have the distinct lavender scent, the oil derived from the flowers is the most important medical component.

Lavender’s Phytochemicals

Lavender oil contains several distinct chemicals with healing properties that complement one another. Consequently, lavender oil has a broad range of healing properties including antiseptic properties, which also make it an excellent general cleaning agent when diluted in warm water. Lavender is one of the few essential oils that can also be applied directly to the skin undiluted.

Uses in Aromatherapy

In aromatherapy, lavender is used for treating depression, amenorrhea, burns, acne, rashes, arthritis, athlete's foot, carpal tunnel syndrome, psoriasis, vaginitis, insomnia, pain, palpitations, anxiety and nervousness. As massage oil, lavender relaxes muscles and eases tension. Lavender oil is used in diffusers, salves, bath products, and undiluted as a topical essential oil. Lavender oil should not be taken internally.

Lavender's Active Ingredients

Lavender oil contains the natural alcohol linalool; ketones; esters; and aldehydes. Linalol provides lavender's antiseptic properties by effectively killing bacteria and viruses. Linalol also helps healing skin irritations including burns, wounds, acne and sores. The aldehydes in lavender are responsible for its distinct aroma and soothing properties. The ketones in lavender effectively reduce pain and inflammation and help induce sleep. The esters in lavender reduce soreness and swelling, prevent muscle spasms, fight fungal
infections and prevent scarring. The esters in lavender also help relieve tension, depression and hysteria, and they help regulate moods.

**Using Lavender**

Lavender is primarily used as an essential oil, which can be purchased in most stores that sell health products, or as the dried herb. As an oil, lavender can be diffused, sprinkled or applied directly to irritated skin. As massage oil, lavender oil should first be diluted with grapeseed or almond oil, using 10 drops of lavender oil to 30 ml of carrier oil. Lavender oil can also be found added to perfumes, flower essences, shampoos, soaps, bath products, herbal salves, and massage oils. Dried lavender herb can be found in sachets, dream pillows, satin-covered herbal eye masks. Lavender herb is also found in herbal cough and cold preparations.

**Skin Therapies**

Used in skin products, lavender helps reduce inflammation and promotes healing of rashes, bruises, minor cuts and sores. In one Los Angeles clinic, lavender oil is used for skin cancer, osteomalacia, facial ulcers and insect bites. Lavender also helps balance oil production and prevent scarring. In shampoos, lavender helps prevent dandruff, and as a final hair rinse lavender combined with lemon oil and diluted in mineral water, helps restore sheen in dry, damaged hair. The oils should be added to the water at least 30 minutes before using to ensure proper solubility. An excellent French lavender bubble bath can be purchased at Sabon, available online at Sabon New York City.

**Resources:**


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