



Weekly Wellness from The Integrative Docs

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EO Notes: Peppermint

What do Peppermint gum and Candy canes have in common? If you answered peppermint oil (*Mentha piperita*) you would be correct. Peppermint is one of the most widely used oils in the food and essential oil industry. This oil is also one of the favorites for clinical aromatherapists and it is frequently the subject of studies conducted by the National Center of Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH).



In many areas, peppermint grows wild and is considered to be a weed; but it is actually a hybrid that originated from spearmint and water mint. This oil is derived through distillation and also by layering it in carrier oils; and due to its potency it is always diluted before use.

According to the NCCIH, peppermint has been used therapeutically for several thousand years. Records from ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt mention that it was used for digestive disorders and other conditions. Today, peppermint is used for irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), the common cold, sinus infections, digestion, and headaches. It is also used topically for muscle aches, joint pain, and itching. When its vapors are inhaled it can also treat coughs and colds, reduce pain, improve mental function, and reduce stress.

Cacao Mint Blend

2 Tablespoons Cacao powder
2 drops peppermint essential oil
Honey or Stevia to taste
4 Cups Water

Slowly heat water with cacao in a saucepan. Add peppermint oil and sweetener when warm, gently stir. Serve immediately.

If you are new to peppermint, try Dr. Ruth's favorite, dairy free winter beverage (left) as a warm comfort.

References:

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/peppermint-oil-benefits#what-is-it>

<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/peppermint-oil>

"The purpose of our lives is to be happy." Dalai Lama

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Dr. Moore is an integrative practitioner who specializes in behavioral and holistic health. She is a board certified clinical aromatherapist with the Alliance of International Aromatherapists, a Fellow with the Complementary Medical Association, and the Chief Medical Officer for 5Strands Affordable Testing, Inc.



My Life at 90

Marshall Smith, MD (retired)



As I consider my life now, having just turned 90, I wonder why I am still alive. What am I supposed to do with my life? One problem that is common to older people is depression, as they struggle to find purpose now that they are retired.

So what is my purpose? I am still active in my church, and I keep active in the activities and events at Parker Ridge. I read and participate in a book club, explore poetry, participate in a writing group; and now, pursue my passion for photography.

My daughters live just a short distance away during the warm months, and my son is in Rockland—but his work schedule is more hectic than mine, and I see him when he comes up to work on his boat. And then, I also make time to see Dr. Ruth and visit with her every couple of weeks.

As I am in the retirement phase of my life and contemplating my purpose, I find that between church, family, friends, and Parker Ridge, my life is rich. I live day to day and stay active as much as my health and fitness levels allow.

Dr. Smith's contribution this week highlights an often overlooked segment of our population—our senior citizens. These men and women have built our society with their youth, raised the generation that we have become, and too often, struggle with their sense of worth and purpose as their friends and sometimes family, pass away before them.

Bette Davis is quoted for her insight, "Getting old is not for sissies." There is much truth to her quote when we consider that our aches and pains develop aches and pains, and the thoughts of working out make our knees and hips cringe. Our diets change as we have no desire to cook solo, and our sleep patterns change to the night owls and daily naps routine.

So how do we find purpose in our golden years? The first thing we can do is eat well and remain active. The nutrients in our food keeps our brains and bodies healthy. The second thing we can do is exercise. A walk a day or simple stretching can do wonders for our bodies and mindsets. The third things that we can do is pursue hobbies or find new passions. These skills exercise our minds and keep our neurotransmitters balanced. And finally, the fourth thing we can do is volunteer in our communities or mentor those who are taking over the reins of our former professions.

These four steps help us to remain active socially and age in place. Be well and do something nice for yourself this week.