

Sweet Chamomile

The delicate looking chamomile flower has very strong properties. Being a relaxant, nothing can calm you down as much as the chamomile. Have a look at its other charming properties and various ways to use it.

By: Soumya Jain



A popular antidote for ancient Egyptians, chamomile is as good for the contemporary world. Spread around the world, the flower has various species and diverse names. Some common names include sweet chamomile, wild chamomile, German chamomile, mayweed and babonig. Though chamomile doesn't have any nutrients, it contains five essential oils and flavonoids which help in protecting the body against the detrimental effects of free radicals. There are mainly two species of chamomile - German and Roman. "Chamomile is a flowering plant used medicinally for decades. The essential difference between Roman and German chamomile lies with respect to their use for various medical problems. However, both are known to give calming effect to the body and act as mood elevator and stress reliever," says Aishwarya Rajan, Nutritionist, NutriBenefits.

Consuming Chamomile

The delicate white petals of the flower

and the sweet smell give no indication of its bitter taste. But that is no reason to undermine its medicinal properties. Mostly taken in the form of tea, chamomile acts as a tonic, anti-spasmodic (cures stomachache) and anodyne (pain relieving). The chamomile oil has anti-inflammatory properties which help to relieve inflamed and irritated skin conditions. "Apart from the widely used chamomile tea, it comes as a capsule and as oil extracted from its flowers (by steam distillation)," says Rajan.

Drink it

Chamomile tea is an extremely effective remedy. It serves as a mild sedative and aids in digestion and helps to cure menstrual cramps. A soothing cup of chamomile tea before bedtime can help soothe frayed nerves and endorse sleep. Chamomile tea is an extremely effective remedy for hysterical and nervous conditions in women. It works well as an emmenagogue (promotes menstrual flow). "Dehydrated chamomile flower is used to make the chamomile tea or

Drinking Chamomile

Chamomile tea is a very popular tea and it has a mild fruity flavour to it. It is a proven remedy in the following cases:

- Acts as a muscle relaxant to combat stress, depression and menstrual cramps
- Is a mild sedative and helpful in combating insomnia
- Useful for treating problems of digestion

Courtesy: Aishwarya Rajan, Nutritionist, NutriBenefits



liquor, which then helps to soothe and relax frayed nerves. It is especially beneficial for people who have predominantly high 'pitta dosha' in them," says Monisha Gupta, president, Craft House. The store in The Metropolitan Hotel, New Delhi, sells spa products and oils among other things.

Several of its chemical compounds, especially one called bisabolol, acts as an anti-spasmodic. A cup or two of chamomile tea a day may also reduce the stomach-eroding effects of aspirin and related drugs - useful for people who need to take painkillers every day. Chamomile tea can be used as a mouthwash to soothe inflamed gums, help fight gum disease and speed up the healing of mouth ulcers. Chamomile tea also helps to reduce the toxins in the body built up due to the intake of painkillers. Thus, chamomile tea is especially good for people who need to take painkillers constantly.

Spread it

Put 10 drops of chamomile oil in your bath water to relax muscles and ease tension. A boon for itching or reddened skin, chamomile oil can cure sunburns also. Mix a few drops of chamomile oil in almond oil and apply it to the affected skin to reduce inflammation. "The molecule system of Chamomile oil is so tiny that it penetrates the skin and helps in blood circulation and cell formation without being addictive. Since a 'pitta' person is aggressive, we have put the chamomile oil in our 'pitta' collection. It's good to do a foot massage with it. Else, it can be put in an aroma lamp, used in a potpourri, or a cotton



swab soaked in chamomile oil can be kept in the pocket," explains Gupta. She also explains that since 'pitta' people have oily skin, the chamomile oil can be blended with grapeseed oil and then applied on the body for a massage.


Chamomile based creams are also good for various skin allergies. "Chamomile has enumerable beauty benefits. Especially for the skin, it works as a miracle and is used to calm acne, eczema and rashes. For dry and itchy skin, Chamomile based creams help provides the skin with moisturizing and replenishing ability. The net result is soft and supple skin," says Rajan.

Chamomile and Spa

Chamomile's light blue oil is one of the most used oils in aromatherapy. Due to its fresh and fruity smell, it serves as a tranquiliser and relaxant. Chamomile tea is also served as a welcome drink in many spas like Westin Sohna-Gurgaon Resort and Spa and Anantara Spa. "You can use them in hot wax, massages, hydro tub and Jacuzzi. We don't find it much in Indian spas, but foreign spas do use it because it is an excellent treatment to calm a person and is also good for sensitive skin," says Blossom Kochhar, Aesthetician and Aromatherapist.

"Chamomile has always been an accepted herbal remedy with multiple benefits. It is appreciated for its comforting effects; chamomile is soothing to the soul and nervous system, it is a mild relaxant and, as such, is often used as an herbal solution to help combat depression, stress and anxiety. It is also used for the treatment of other diseases like aches and pains," says Pratibha Mittal, Assistant Spa Manager, Westin Sohna-Gurgaon Resort & Spa.

The last word

However, Chamomile, even with its numerous benefits, can prove to be allergic for some. If one is allergic to plants of the Asteraceae family - daisies and chrysanthemums - then it is recommended not to use chamomile. Also, pregnant women should avoid it. 

Chamomile beauty secrets

- Use 1 drop of Chamomile in a teaspoon of Aloe Vera Gel and apply to your skin as a moisturizer
- When you are very hyper, put 5-10 drops of Chamomile in a tub and have a bath and soak in it for 10-15 minutes and then drink a Chamomile tea and relax
- It is also very good for Body Massage. Mix 1 tablespoon Almond oil + 1 tablespoon Sunflower oil and 3-4 drops Chamomile oil. Have a body massage with it

Courtesy: Blossom Kochhar, Aesthetician and Aromatherapist