

Rose water: Benefits, uses, and side effects



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Lavender can be distilled into an essential oil, and has a range of medical applications.

The herb is highly regarded for skin and beauty and is commonly used in fragrances and shampoos to help purify the skin. It can be purchased over-the-counter (OTC) from drugstores, and some versions are used to add flavor to baked goods and foods.

There are also many medicinal properties associated with lavender.

Lavender oil is believed to have antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties, which can help to heal minor burns and bug bites.

Research suggests that it may be useful for treating anxiety, [insomnia](#), depression, and restlessness.

Some studies suggest that consuming lavender as a tea [can help digestive issues](#) such as vomiting, nausea, intestinal gas, [upset stomach](#), and abdominal swelling.

In addition to helping with digestive problems, lavender is used to help relieve pain from [headaches](#), sprains, toothaches, and sores. It can also be used to prevent hair loss.

Fungal infections

A study published in the *Journal of Medical Microbiology* found that lavender oil [could be effective](#) in combating antifungal-resistant infections.

The researchers found that the oil was lethal to a range of strains that can cause disease in the skin.

In the study, the essential oils distilled from the *Lavandula* genus of the lavender plant seemed to work by destroying the membranes of fungal cells.

The study showed that *Lavandula* oil is potent and demonstrates antifungal activity on a wide spectrum.

Wound healing

A study [published](#) in the journal *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* compared the effects of several treatments for wound healing.

The researchers compared the effects of transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS), saline solution, povidone-iodine, and lavender oil. These were applied to laboratory rats.

The study authors noted that wounds closed faster in the TENS and lavender oil groups than the control groups. These findings suggest that lavender has an acceleratory effect on wound healing.

Hair loss

Lavender is possibly effective for treating [alopecia areata](#). This is a condition in which hair is lost from some or all areas of the body.

Research from 1998 shows that lavender can promote hair growth by [up to 44 percent](#)[Trusted Source](#) after 7 months of treatment.

In a more [recent study](#)[Trusted Source](#), researchers found that applying lavender oil to the backs of mice helped to promote hair growth over the course of 4 weeks.

Anxiety disorder and related conditions

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Lavender scents have been shown to reduce anxiety before a dental appointment.

A [review article](#) in the *International Journal of Psychiatry in Clinical Practice* evaluates how effective Silexan might be for patients with different anxiety disorders. Silexan is a lavender-oil preparation available in 80-milligram (mg) gelatine capsules.

The team found that Silexan had an anxiolytic, or anxiety-reducing, effect on patients with generalized or subsyndromal anxiety within 2 weeks.

Researchers [have also found Trusted Source](#) that lavender scent may help anxious dental patients.

The investigators measured the dental anxiety levels of 340 adult patients during their wait at the dentist's waiting room for their appointment.

Half the patients were exposed to lavender scent, while the other half were not.

The team found that those exposed to lavender scent reported lower levels of anxiety compared to the other patients. The calming effect of lavender was present regardless of the type of scheduled dental appointment.

Kritsidima, who conducted the study, concluded:

“Our findings suggest that lavender could certainly be used as an effective ‘on-the-spot’ anxiety reduction in dentists’ waiting rooms.”
Dr. M. Kritsidima, study author

Lavender does not seem to impact anxiety about future dental visits. However, it has been shown to provide a sense of calm while attending a treatment.

Post-tonsillectomy pain in children

Lavender oil has been shown to reduce the amount of painkilling medicine required after a tonsillectomy.

A team of researchers at the Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Iran, carried out a study to determine whether aromatherapy with *Lavandula angustifolia* essential oil might reduce symptoms of pain in children after the removal of the tonsils.

The study included 48 children aged 6 to 12 years. They were randomly separated into two groups of 24 participants. One group took painkillers alongside lavender, and the other took only painkillers.

The frequency of each child's acetaminophen use and nocturnal awakening due to pain was monitored for 3 days after surgery. Pain intensity was also measured. Acetaminophen is also known as Tylenol or paracetamol, and the group using lavender oil was shown to use acetaminophens less frequently.

However, there was [no significant difference](#) in how often they woke up at night or their perceptions of pain intensity.

Due to the small sample size, more research is required to fully confirm lavender oil as an effective painkiller.

Premenstrual emotional symptoms

Researchers [have also studied](#) whether lavender might help to alleviate premenstrual emotional symptoms.

Many women of reproductive age experience a range of symptoms in the premenstrual phase, commonly known as premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

Even though PMS is common, no single treatment is universally recognized as effective. As a result, many women turn to alternative therapies, such as aromatherapy.

This crossover study involved 17 women, aged on average 20.6 years, with mild-to-moderate premenstrual symptoms. The participants spent one menstrual cycle with no lavender aromatherapy treatment, and another undergoing lavender aromatherapy.

The study concluded that lavender aromatherapy could alleviate premenstrual emotional symptoms.

What does lavender not treat?

There is [insufficient evidence](#) to rate lavender's effectiveness for treating:

- depression
- [colic](#) in infants
- [constipation](#)
- nausea and vomiting
- [migraines](#)
- otitis, or ear infection
- high blood pressure
- menstrual pain
- eczema
- cancer-related pain
- [dementia](#)
- lice

[One study found Trusted Source](#) that lavender fragrance could have a beneficial effect on insomnia and depression in female college students. However, the authors highlighted that “repeated studies are needed to confirm effective proportions of lavender oil and carrier oil for insomnia and depression.”

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved lavender for medicinal use. **It is sold as a supplement only and should not replace any prescribed course of treatment.**

If you choose to use this essential oil, the FDA does not monitor these products. There may be concerns about purity, safety, or quality. Only purchase essential oils from reputable companies.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) [warn people](#) to be cautious when combining lavender with the following:

- drugs that induce sleepiness, such as benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and Ambien
- drugs to reduce [blood pressure](#), such as captopril, enalapril, and losartan

If you are already taking the above, seek medical advice before adding lavender to your drug regimen.

A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)* revealed that repeated use of lavender oil on the skin [might trigger prepubertal gynecomastia](#), a condition that causes enlarged breast tissue in boys before [puberty](#).

The safety of taking lavender during pregnancy or while breast-feeding has also not been confirmed.

Discuss any use of essential oils, herbs, or supplements with your doctor if you are pregnant or breast-feeding.

As lavender is thought to slow down the [central nervous system](#), doctors advise patients to stop using lavender at least 2 weeks before surgery.