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## Peppermint leaf

*Mentha x piperita* L., *folium*

This is a summary of the scientific conclusions reached by the Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products (HMPC) on the medicinal uses of peppermint leaf. The HMPC conclusions are taken into account by EU Member States when evaluating applications for the licensing of herbal medicines containing peppermint leaf.

This summary is not intended to provide practical advice on how to use medicines containing peppermint leaf. For practical information about using peppermint leaf medicines, patients should read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact their doctor or pharmacist.

### What is peppermint leaf?

Peppermint leaf is the common name for the leaf of the plant *Mentha x piperita* L.

The HMPC conclusions only cover peppermint leaf preparations that are obtained by drying and comminuting (reducing into tiny pieces) the leaves or by putting the plant material in a solvent (ethanol) to dissolve compounds and form a liquid extract. The solvent is then evaporated to obtain a dry extract.

Herbal medicines containing this peppermint leaf preparation are usually available as herbal tea to be drunk and in liquid or solid forms to be taken by mouth.

Peppermint leaf preparations may also be found in combination with other herbal substances in some herbal medicines. These combinations are not covered in this summary.

### What are the HMPC conclusions on its medicinal uses?

The HMPC concluded that, on the basis of its long-standing use, these peppermint leaf preparations can be used for relief of digestion-related problems such as indigestion and flatulence. They should only be used in adults and children over the age of 4 years. If the symptoms worsen or persist for more than 2 weeks, a doctor or a qualified health care practitioner should be consulted. Detailed instructions on how to take peppermint leaf medicines and who can use them can be found in the package leaflet that comes with the medicine.



## **What evidence supports the use of peppermint leaf medicines?**

The HMPC conclusions on the use of these peppermint leaf preparation medicines for digestion-related problems are based on their 'traditional use' in this condition. This means that, although there is insufficient evidence from clinical trials, the effectiveness of these herbal medicines is plausible and there is evidence that they have been used safely in this way for at least 30 years (including at least 15 years within the EU). Moreover, the intended use does not require medical supervision.

In its assessment, the HMPC considered studies in laboratory tests which suggested that peppermint leaf medicines relaxed the gut and had antispasmodic effects, thereby helping with the digestion, as well as pain relief.

For detailed information on the studies assessed by the HMPC, see the HMPC assessment report.

## **What are the risks associated with peppermint leaf medicines?**

Side effects with peppermint leaf preparations include worsening of gastroesophageal reflux (where stomach acid comes up into the throat and mouth) and heartburn. Patients with gallstones (stones in the gallbladder) and any other bile-related problems should be cautious when using peppermint leaf preparations.

Further information on the risks associated with these peppermint leaf medicines, including the appropriate precautions for their safe use, can be found in the monograph which is published on the Agency's website under the section 'Documents': [ema.europa.eu/medicines/herbal/menthae-piperitae-folium](https://ema.europa.eu/medicines/herbal/menthae-piperitae-folium).

## **How are peppermint leaf medicines approved in the EU?**

Any applications for the licensing of medicines containing peppermint leaf have to be submitted to the national authorities responsible for medicinal products, which will assess the application for the herbal medicine and take into account the scientific conclusions of the HMPC.

Information on the use and licensing of peppermint leaf medicines in EU Member States should be obtained from the relevant national authorities.

## **Other information about peppermint leaf medicines**

Further information on the HMPC assessment of peppermint leaf medicines, including details of the Committee's conclusions, can be found in the section 'Documents' on the Agency's website: [ema.europa.eu/medicines/herbal/menthae-piperitae-folium](https://ema.europa.eu/medicines/herbal/menthae-piperitae-folium). For more information about treatment with peppermint leaf medicines, read the package leaflet that comes with the medicine or contact your doctor or pharmacist.