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Top 10 Terrific Uses for Tea Tree Essential Oil

By Ty Bollinger | November 14, 2016

1. Anti-bacterial, Antiseptic, Antioxidant

Tea tree oil has long been used to get rid of the bacteria that cause body odor and acne. Recent research indicates it is also effective against some fairly deadly bacteria such as methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus, better known as MRSA, which is currently plaguing our hospitals and medical facilities.

American researchers reported in 1999 that one of the ways tea tree oil helps is by activating white blood cells which are part of the immune system. French researchers investigating tea tree oil in 2006 stated, "Melaleuca alternifolia essential oil may not only act as an anti-inflammatory mediator through its antioxidant activity but may also efficiently protect the organism by reducing the proliferation of inflammatory cells without affecting their capacity to secrete anti-inflammatory cytokines."

Interestingly, Malaysian researchers published an article in 2013 in the journal *Phytomedicine* which investigated the relationship between various essential oils and antibiotics. The researchers found that none of the oils evaluated (including melaleuca alternifolia) caused an adverse reaction when taken with various antibiotic drugs. They found that the use of some of the essential oils (namely peppermint, cinnamon, and lavender) along with antibiotics provided a synergistic effect!

2. Anti-cancer

Joint Australian and American research reported in *Journal of Dermatological Science* in 2012 found that tumor-bearing mice given a combination of melaleuca alternifolia and dimethyl sulphoxide (DMSO) activated an immune response and resulted in tumor cell death.

Two 2010 Australian studies with mice found that tea tree oil and its major active terpene component, terpinen-4-ol, had anti-tumor activity against two cancer cell lines: mesothelioma and melanoma. Researchers stated that tea tree oil "significantly inhibited the growth" of these two tumor cell types.

3. Anti-fungal, Anti-mold

Tea tree oil has been used for decades to help treat conditions like jock itch, nail fungus, and athlete's foot because of its excellent anti-fungal properties.

In 2016 Italian researchers scrutinized several different essential oils including basil, mint, tea tree, lavender, winter savory, and oregano for their antifungal effects against *Candida albicans*. They discovered the essential oils inhibited both the growth and activity of *Candida albicans* more efficiently than a popular antifungal drug, clotrimazole.

A 2015 Australian study investigating fungal contamination in indoor environments looked at tea tree oil and four other agents, including industrial strength disinfectants. Researchers noted that of the five substances tested, the tea tree oil exhibited the best inhibitory effect on the growth of the two fungi studied. Tea tree oil was just as effective applied as a liquid or vapor.

Cancer patients often suffer from oral yeast infections due to the treatments they undergo. In 2006, UK researchers found that tea tree oil was effective against 301 different kinds of fungal

infections found in the mouths of 199 patients with advanced cancer. Researchers stated that the tea tree oil was even effective against 41 fungi that were known to be resistant to traditional antifungal drugs.

Researchers also found tea tree oil was quite effective in treating the symptoms of tinea pedis (athlete's foot).

4. Anti-inflammatory, Immune Stimulating

A plethora of research studies exist attesting to the anti-inflammatory properties of tea tree oil. In 2014, Brazilian researchers found that in addition to being an anti-inflammatory, tea tree oil also stimulated human macrophages, a type of white blood cell of the immune system involved in engulfing and destroying bacteria, cancer cells, microbes, etc.

5. Antiparasitic

A study reported in May 2016 by Brazilian researchers discovered that tea tree oil was effective against the eggs and larvae of *Haemonchus contortus* (aka the barber's pole worm, a common parasite of ruminants).

A 2009 Italian study found that tea tree oil was effective against equine ringworm.

6. Anti-viral

Tea tree oil has long been used for easing the pain and itching of chickenpox and cold sores, both caused by the herpes simplex virus. Tea tree has also been found to be helpful against influenza; even the H1N1 virus strain.

7. Respiratory Complaints

Tea tree oil has a lengthy history of use for easing lung congestion and infections. Indeed, a Chinese animal study reported in 2016 found that a nanoemulsion of tea tree oil was effective against fungal and bacterial pneumonia due to its anti-microbial, anti-fungal, and anti-inflammatory properties.

8. Insect Repellent

Tea tree oil has been used by indigenous Australians for hundreds of years as an insect repellent, and also as an aid to heal insect bites. In addition, a study reported in 2015 by Brazilian researchers found that tea tree oil was effective against two fly species.

9. Dental Health

Although it is generally not recommended to take tea tree oil internally, it can be used for a variety of dental complaints. See "Precautions" below for more information about internal use.

In 2015, Indian researchers reviewed hundreds of studies on essential oils to investigate their therapeutic effect in a dentistry setting. They found that tea tree oil's antibacterial and antifungal benefits made it a promising agent against oral pathogens.

Tea tree oil has also been found to be useful for periodontal disease. A 2016 Indian study found that a gel made from coenzyme Q10 and tea tree oil proved to be effective in the treatment of chronic periodontitis.

10. Skin Complaints

Psoriasis, eczema, dermatitis, sores, wounds, sunburn, warts, acne, and insect bites... down through the centuries all of these conditions have been eased using tea tree oil. Modern science is catching on to the reasons why it's so beneficial.

A 2013 review of various studies on tea tree oil by Iranian scientists discusses its antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. They also stated that tea tree oil accelerated wound healing and exhibited anti-skin cancer activity.