



Peppermint Oil Capsules

Called "Drug of Choice for IBS"

For IBS patients with constipation or diarrhea, to alleviate general symptoms, and to improve quality of life

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December 17, 2003

[This week ~ Coffee, diarrhea, constipation, IBS, and spasms](#)



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Hello to everyone -

This is the last IBS Newsletter of 2003, so here's wishing everyone happy holidays and a delightfully joyous and healthy new year! I'd like to thank each and every one of you for your generous support of the IBS Newsletter & Message Boards; I am truly grateful for this. I'm also just tickled pink to see so many people being helped by my new IBS products. I spent a great deal of time researching the best, most affordable, and highest quality supplements and other items that are specifically beneficial for IBS. It's so gratifying to hear from you that these efforts were worthwhile. Your patronage of our business is allowing us to continue publishing the IBS Newsletter and keep the IBS Message Boards free to everyone who needs them, not just those who can afford to subscribe to them. Thank you.

Finally, a very sweet thank you from the bottom of my heart to all of our message board moderators, because without their help I would truly be at a loss. Hugs and kisses to TessLouise - Mags - HansSolo - Ruchie - YogaTeacher - JillSklar - and (our lone fella!) ShawnEric.

As always, we have the latest IBS and digestive health news, research, and studies as well, so enjoy!

Best Wishes,
Heather Van Vorous

Food & Recipes

Greek Roasted Fish & Potatoes

Our last recipe of the year is a sunny Mediterranean treat for these dark and gloomy December days. Greek Roasted Fish & Potatoes is a rustic winter dish with the summery spark of dried herbs. It's the perfect hearty dinner to warm you up when it's cold outside...and the leftover potatoes are completely scrumptious for lunch the next day! This is a low fat, high soluble fiber main dish that's an easy, dependable favorite in my house. Hopefully, you'll enjoy it as much as I do.

Makes 4 Servings

- 3 large russet potatoes, peeled, cut into 1/4" slices
- 5 T olive oil, divided
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 1/2 t dried oregano
- 1 t salt
- 1/4 t crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 1/4 cup water
- 4 red snapper or halibut fillets, 4-6 ounces each
- 2 T dried parsley, divided
- salt and pepper to taste
- fresh lemon wedges for serving

Preheat oven to 450F. Spray a 13 x 9 inch baking pan with cooking oil. Spread potato slices in pan, overlapping only where necessary. Blend 4 T olive oil, garlic, oregano, salt and optional red pepper in small bowl. Pour over potatoes and spread with a rubber spatula. Pour wine and water over potatoes. Cover pan with foil or lid and bake 20 minutes. Uncover and bake 30-40 minutes more, until potatoes are tender. Place fish fillets on top of potatoes. Drizzle remaining 1 T olive oil over fish. Sprinkle fish with 1 T parsley. Bake uncovered just until fish is opaque in center, 15-20 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining 1 T parsley, salt and pepper, then squirt fresh lemon juice over and serve.

For hundreds of delicious recipes, come visit the [IBS Recipe Exchange Message Board!](#)

Are you just learning how to eat for IBS? A little intimidated at the thought of special IBS recipes? Don't worry! Come see [the IBS Diet pages](#), and find the answers to all your questions.

Rx News & Research

Faecal incontinence - Many Treatment Options Now Exist

Faecal incontinence, not a glamorous area of medicine, has changed markedly in its recognition and management over the past 10 years. Patients and doctors can talk about it now as the taboo is disappearing. Pathophysiology is better understood, helped by advances in imaging. Treatments are improving as they move away from invasive sphincter surgery as an early step to the use of simple pharmacological treatments, behavioural techniques, injectable biomaterials, and, when necessary, minimally invasive surgery. [Check here for more information...](#)

Increased Anal Resting Pressure & Rectal Sensitivity in Crohn's

A recent study demonstrates how patients with Crohn's disease without macroscopic proctitis have increased anal pressures in conjunction with increased rectal sensitivity. This may contribute to later development of anal pathology, because increased intra-anal pressures may compromise anal circulation, causing fissures, and also discharging of fecal matter into the perirectal tracts, which may have a role in infection and fistula development. [Check here for more information...](#)

Intestinal Gas Distribution Determines Abdominal Symptoms

Patients with functional gut disorders such as IBS manifest poor tolerance to intestinal gas loads, but the mechanism of this dysfunction is unknown. This study aimed to explore the relative importance of the amount of intestinal gas versus its distribution on symptom

production, and to correlate gut motility and perception of gas loads. [Check here for more information...](#)

Abnormal Colonic Propagated Activity in Patients with Constipation

The pathophysiological basis of constipation is still unclear, and the role of colonic dysfunction is debated, especially in irritable bowel syndrome. Objective data are quite scarce, especially concerning colonic propulsive activity. This study aimed to evaluate high- and low-amplitude colonic propulsive activity in constipated patients (slow-transit type and irritable bowel syndrome) in comparison with normal controls. [Check here for more information...](#)

Virtual Colonoscopy Shows Promise

Virtual colonoscopy - a new, less-invasive method of screening for colon cancer and other bowel diseases - is already known to be faster and less troublesome for patients than conventional colonoscopy. Now, a study shows it may also be slightly more effective. [Check here for more information...](#)

Are GERD and Sleep Apnea Related?

Gastroesophageal reflux and sleep problems go hand in hand. At least 80% of the 60 million Americans who have been diagnosed with GERD report worse symptoms at night, and three in four say they routinely wake up from sleep because of them. GERD affects more than 20% of Americans with weekly heartburn symptoms.

This association makes sense because when you're awake, gravity helps keep acids needed to digest food down where they belong -- in the stomach. But when you're lying down, these acids can leak back into the esophagus, damaging its lining and significantly boosting the risk of esophageal cancer. [Check here for more information...](#)

Looking for the latest IBS research and news?
[Check out the IBS Research Library!](#)

Ask Heather

Common Pitfalls ~ The Seven Sneaky Deadly Sins of the IBS Diet

"I'm following the Eating for IBS diet, but I still have problems. What am I doing wrong?"

I hear from many people who have made a great effort to [manage their IBS through diet](#), but who still have abdominal symptoms they feel certain are associated with their eating habits. They're often very frustrated because they believe that there aren't any steps left for them to take. The good news here is that it's much more likely than not that there are still dietary triggers involved, they're simply being overlooked.

I've found that there are seven specific pitfalls that ensnare many people as they adjust their diet - let's call them the Seven Sneaky Deadly Sins of the IBS Diet:

1. Coffee (yes, decaf counts)
2. Yogurt (it's the safest dairy product for IBS...isn't it?)
3. Alcohol (just one glass of wine is okay, right?)
4. Vitamin supplements (they're good for you, aren't they?)
5. No insoluble fiber foods (they're triggers, so you just don't eat them, right?)
6. Too low a dosage of soluble fiber supplements
7. Not drinking enough water (doesn't soda pop count?)

First on the list is...

#1. I've given up all coffee except for my morning cup of decaf. I have cramps every morning too, but just one cup of coffee - especially decaf! - wouldn't cause this, would it?

Yep - just one cup of coffee is all it takes to completely disrupt the gut of most people with IBS. Coffee is a very powerful GI tract irritant - and it's NOT the caffeine that's the culprit. Caffeine is a stimulant, so it can aggravate IBS as well, but this just means that regular coffee has an awful double whammy.

Decaffeinated coffee is still practically guaranteed to trigger abdominal spasms, diarrhea, and a very unpleasant sense of urgency. Why? Because all coffee beans, decaf included, contain an enzyme that irritates the entire digestive tract.

Interestingly, though coffee is known for its laxative effect and many folks with IBS-constipation use coffee for just this reason, the end result will actually be a worsening of IBS symptoms - *including constipation*. The abdominal cramping and GI irritation from coffee increases gut motility violently and artificially, which is likely to cause a rebound effect of greatly slowed or halted gut motility if you're constipation-prone. In other words, the short-term laxative gain from coffee is likely to actually exacerbate IBS-constipation in the long-run. If you have IBS, your colon contractions are by definition dysfunctional; using coffee to irritate your colon to the point of spasms every morning will simply cause more severe, and chronic, gut motility problems.

Coffee is also highly acidic, and acidic foods can aggravate IBS as well as upper GI disorders such as GERD. Adding insult to injury, drinking coffee first thing in the morning, on an empty stomach, offers absolutely no buffer for the acid, irritant, and stimulant effects of the beverage. In addition, mornings are routinely stressful for many people, as they're tired, rushed, and trying to get out of the house to school or work. Adding a deadly dietary trigger like coffee into a hectic morning schedule is virtually guaranteed to cause IBS problems.

If you've been drinking decaf, you can quit cold turkey without caffeine withdrawal, and you should see improvements in your IBS immediately. Your first morning without coffee will likely be your first morning without abdominal cramps. If you're used to coffee with caffeine, quitting can trigger caffeine withdrawal, and you may suffer headaches for up to two weeks. You can try to wean yourself onto a half-decaf, half-regular coffee habit, and then gradually eliminate coffee completely. This will help prevent the headaches but will also prolong the IBS symptoms, so you'll have to choose the lesser of the two evils.

If you love coffee (and this is often the underlying reason people continue to drink it - they likely know that it's affecting their IBS, but it's never easy to give up something delicious) there are some interesting substitutes to try. *Rocamoto* is a roasted soybean drink available at health food stores that satisfies many hard-core coffee drinkers. *Teacino* is blend of herbs, nuts, fruits and grains that are roasted, ground and brewed just like coffee, and is also available at health food stores.

Chai, an Indian spiced-tea drink (decaf versions are available), is positively luscious when brewed with soy or rice milk, and has the same hearty quality that coffee offers. You can buy Chai tea bags, loose leaf tea, or [make it from scratch with a recipe from Eating for IBS](#) with very little effort. Or, you could try something completely different, and switch to a helpful herbal tea for your morning (and afternoon, and evening) beverage. Peppermint, fennel, chamomile, anise, and ginger are all digestion-friendly teas that will actively help - not hurt - your digestive health.

See the rest of the [Seven Sneaky Deadly Sins of the IBS Diet!](#)

[Get the Free IBS Diet Cheat Sheet!](#)

- Learn IBS Trigger Foods
- IBS Safe Foods
- Soluble Vs. Insoluble Fiber
- 10 Commandments of Eating for IBS
- More!



Excerpted from Eating for IBS.

About Us

Heather & Company for IBS, LLC is dedicated to serving people with Irritable Bowel Syndrome. Our mission is to provide education, support, and products that allow people with IBS to successfully manage their symptoms through lifestyle modifications.

We offer extensive information and tangible help for IBS, including the world's [best-selling and best-reviewed books](#) for the disorder. We provide the internet's [top IBS web site resources](#); a twice-monthly IBS Newsletter; seminars and classes; dietary brochures for patient distribution by health care professionals; [an IBS Research Library](#); and Heather Cooks!, a healthy cooking show on Seattle television. Much of our work is based on Heather's development of the first and only comprehensive IBS dietary guidelines and recipes, an achievement which has earned [numerous awards and accolades](#) as well as thousands of [thank you letters](#) from IBS sufferers.

Heather & Company also provides the only patient-expert moderated [IBS Message Boards](#) on the internet with forums for diet, recipes, hypnotherapy, yoga, plus Crohn's and Colitis. In addition, we support and coordinate the formation and continuation of local [in-person IBS support groups](#) across the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand. We will soon have other IBS services and products available.

Our website receives over 1.5 million visits each year, and our newsletter is sent to over 18,000 people. Every month over one thousand new people join our email list. We are regular exhibitors at the Digestive Disease Week and American Dietetic Association conferences.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for the message boards and this newsletter for companies and/or products that have been legitimately established as helpful for digestive disorders. Please [contact us](#) for information.

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