



# SOOTHE DIGEST

Relieves gas and bloating

## DAMAGE CONTROL FOR INDIGESTION

Indigestion, a symptom of a person's inability to digest properly, is a common problem. It may be triggered by particular foods, wine, carbonated beverages, eating too fast, or overeating. Some people find that spicy foods, high-fibre foods, fatty foods, or too much caffeine make the problem worse. Symptoms may be worsened by anxiety and depression. Indigestion usually causes stomach and intestinal pain, often accompanied by gas and bloating.

A carminative is a medicinal plant with antispasmodic activity that is used to alleviate a combination of cramps in the digestive tract and flatulence. Carminative herbs are good at soothing the stomach and reducing symptoms associated with indigestion such as excessive gas. Soothe Digest by Natural Factors contains fennel seed, anise seed and caraway seed, three delicious and aromatic carminative herbs that are well-known as spices and have a long history of traditional use for a wide range of ailments, including gastrointestinal (GI) disorders such as dyspepsia, gastritis and peptic ulcers.

## HOW CARMINATIVE HERBS AID DIGESTION

Carminative herbs have several actions that bring relief: they stimulate peristalsis, which is the wave-like muscle contractions that push food through the digestive tract; they help relax the smooth muscle of the digestive tract, reducing painful spasms; and lastly the antibacterial properties of the volatile oils aid in reducing pain that results from the gas that is formed when bacteria in the intestines act on food that has not been fully digested. Passing intestinal gas is a normal bodily function, however, it can be painful, uncomfortable and embarrassing. Although gas is not usually a sign of serious illness, expelling excess gas can bring quick relief.

Over-the-counter medications for indigestion are some of the best-selling drugs on the market. They may relieve symptoms temporarily, however they do nothing to address the underlying cause, and often have undesirable side effects. In the long run, treating just the symptoms can aggravate an underlying condition that is causing indigestion. Carminative herbs on the other hand don't suppress the natural defense mechanisms of the body. While in some cases carminative herbs cannot address the underlying cause of indigestion, there are no damaging side effects with their use.

## THE MANY BENEFITS OF SOOTHE DIGEST

Soothe Digest provides protection and soothing support for the GI, biliary and digestive tracts through the following actions:

- Stimulates peristalsis, the wave-like action of the digestive tract that moves food through the digestive system
- Relaxes the smooth muscles of the GI, reducing painful spasms and bloating, and expelling excessive gas
- Anti-inflammatory effect helps reduce GI irritation that can cause heartburn
- Antimicrobial and antiseptic action combats many bacterial pathogens and yeasts implicated in causing digestive disorders
- Mucolytic action helps dissolve mucous in the upper respiratory tract
- Potent antibacterial and anti-ulcer activity protects against bacterial pathogens associated with gastritis and peptic ulcers
- Provides antimutagenic protection against cellular DNA damage
- Anticancer activity protects against colon carcinogenesis

## FENNEL (*FOENICULUM VULGARE*)

Fennel seed is used as a food and spice around the world, especially in India where it is also valued for its healing powers. The seed has many medicinal virtues and has been used traditionally to alleviate digestive complaints. A handful of fennel seeds has been used to treat heartburn for thousands of years. The German Pharmacopoeia recognizes fennel seed as a source of essential oils and bitters that aid digestion and treat dyspepsia, mild stomach cramps, bloating and flatulence.

Fennel seed is recommended to counteract the mild cramps accompanying the use of laxatives and to dissolve mucous in the upper respiratory tract. The seed is also considered to be antimicrobial and antiseptic. The essential oil of fennel seed also has strong antioxidant activity, superior to BHT and BHA, two commonly-used food preservatives.

Fennel seeds have potent activity against *Helicobacter pylori* (HP), a bacterial pathogen associated with gastritis, chronic gastritis, peptic ulcer disease, gastric carcinoma and primary gastric B-cell lymphoma. A study conducted at the University of Illinois examined *in vitro* susceptibility of 15 strains of HP to botanical extracts used traditionally for the treatment of GI disorders and found that an extract of fennel seed had strong activity against HP strains at 50 microgram/mL. This activity is important because HP, identified in 1982, is now recognized as the primary etiological factor associated with the development of gastritis and peptic ulcers, among other diseases (Mahady, *et al*).

**ANISE (PIMPINELLA ANISUM)**

The seed of anise is another herb commonly used as a food and spice with many medicinal qualities. The seed has been used as a licorice-flavoured breath freshener for thousands of years. The German Pharmacopoeia recognizes it as a source of essential oils and bitters that can effectively treat mild stomach cramps, flatulence and colicky symptoms in the intestinal tract, especially in nursing babies and infants. A University of Mississippi study documented the anti-inflammatory activity of anise seed essential oils and isolated compounds. Their findings were a significant contribution to what we know about the pharmacological activity and benefits of the Pimpinella species for disease prevention, especially those related to inflammation (Tabanca, *et al.*). This anti-inflammatory activity may explain some of the long-standing benefits of anise seed for treating gastritis and other digestive diseases. Modern science has also confirmed the relaxant action of anise seed, explaining its historical use in folk medicine as an antispasmodic agent.

The antibacterial activity of the essential oils and methanol extracts of anise seed was documented in a study conducted at the University of Mosul involving nine pathogenic bacteria (*Staphylococcus aureus*, *Bacillus cereus*, *Escherichia coli*, *Proteus vulgaris*, *Proteus mirabilis*, *Salmonella typhi*, *Salmonella typhimurium*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*). The greatest effect was observed against *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Bacillus cereus* and *Proteus vulgaris* (Tabanca, *et al.*).

**CARAWAY (CARUM CARVI)**

Caraway is a shrub with a long history as a medicinal plant. The seeds are often used in cooking as a spice, while the oil is primarily used for medicinal purposes. Caraway oil is used to treat stomach disorders, as it is both a stimulant and carminative. It is especially helpful in relieving colic in infants. In folk medicine, caraway was used to sweeten bad breath and improve digestion.

Caraway seed also has noted activity for preventing colon cancer. Colon cancer is one of the most common malignancies in many regions of the world and is thought to arise from the accumulation of mutations in a single epithelial cell of the colon and rectum. A study conducted at Annamalai University examined the

effect of different doses of caraway on the formation of aberrant crypt foci (ACF), putative precursors of colon cancer, and the levels of fecal bile acids, neutral sterols, and alkaline phosphatase activities in 1,2-dimethylhydrazine induced colon cancer in rats. Overall, the results showed that caraway inhibited tumourigenesis (Kamaleeswari, *et al.*). Studies conducted at the University of Tokushima noted the antimutagenic action of caraway seeds for protecting cells against DNA damage, as well as their anticancer effect on colon carcinogenesis (Mazaki, *et al.*).

Carvone, the main constituent of caraway essential oil, is also classified as an antiseptic, a central nervous system stimulant, an insecticide and a vermicide (dewormer). Several controlled studies have shown combinations of caraway oil with peppermint oil, curcuma extract, ginger extract, etc. to be as effective as conventional drugs in treating dyspepsia. A study to assess the efficacy and safety of enteric-coated capsules containing a combination of 50 mg caraway oil and 90 mg peppermint oil in patients with functional dyspepsia found that patients were much or very much improved in several parameters after one month, to a statistically significant level. In 96 outpatients taking one capsule twice daily of this combination or a placebo, overall pain, pressure, heaviness and fullness were reduced by 40–43% in the treatment group, compared to only 22% with the placebo.

Caraway seeds, like fennel, have potent activity against *Helicobacter pylori*. The previously mentioned University of Illinois study also found that caraway seed was effective against *Helicobacter pylori* strains at 100 micrograms/mL (Mahady, *et al.*).

**DOSAGE**

1 capsule 3 times daily, preferably with meals or as directed by a health care practitioner.

**SAFETY**

These delicious and aromatic carminative herbs are well-known as food spices and traditional medicines, and have been safely used to treat a wide range of ailments, including GI disorders such as dyspepsia, gastritis and peptic ulcers.

**Pregnancy and lactation:** Safe during pregnancy and lactation. However, women should consult their health care practitioner before use.

**Children:** Suitable for children at one-third the adult dose.

**Drug interactions:** None known.

**Contraindications:** Do not use if you are allergic to the celery family (*Apiaceae* or *Umbelliferae*), anise seed or anethole.

Some people can eat anything and never get an upset stomach. Other people are more sensitive to food and certain ones just don't agree with them. Even stress can cause digestive problems. For occasional indigestion, Soothe Digest can bring quick relief and help promote long-term healthy digestion.

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