

Chamomile

Latin Name: *Matricaria recutita*, *M. chamomilla*. **Family:** Compositae (Asteraceae), **Common Names:** commonly known as chamomile, German chamomile, Hungarian chamomile (kamilla), Babunj (Arabic name). "Matricaria", which is derived from Latin term "mater" means (mother), the herb was used to cure gynecological problems. **Native habitat:** Native to Europe and Asia. In Mughal period, the plant was introduced to India and now it is grown in Kashmir, Punjab and other nearby areas. Also, it is found in North Africa, Asia, North and South America, Australia, and New Zealand. **Description:** a low- growing plant with alternating leaves. The flower color is white and are daisy-like with white petals surrounding a yellow disk. Chamomile should be harvested during March- April during the peak flowering season. **Parts used:** Flowers. **Taste:** Bitter, aromatic & sweet. **Energetics:** Warm, neutral and relaxant.

History:

Chamomile has a rich history for being used as an herbal and spiritual remedy for thousands of years.

It was used in ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and Anglo-Saxons. The chamomile drug is included in the pharmacopoeia of 26 countries. The name Chamomile comes from the Greek word meaning "ground apple."

Chamomile was used in pagan rituals and spells for many reasons; enhance positive energy, transform the negative energy into positive energy, emotional and spiritual balance, bring wealth and luck, for vital energy and banishing negative spirits.

Active constituents:

The most important therapeutic constituents are: Sesquiterpenes, flavonoids, coumarins, polyacetylenes, Essential oils: farnesene, bisabolol, chamazulene. Eleven bioactive phenolic compounds: herniarin (Coumarin), umbelliferone (Coumarin), chlorogenic acid and caffeic acid (phenylpropanoids), apigenin, apigenin-7-O-glucoside, luteolin and luteolin-7-O-glucoside (flavones), quercetin and rutin (flavonols) and naringenin (flavanone). More than 120 chemical constituents: 28 terpenoids, 36 flavonoids and etc. Plants contain essential oil, chamazulene, apigenin, alpha heteroside, salicylic acid and non-crystalline beta-heteroside. It contains azulene, glucoside, a resin, some organic material (Alkaloid, carbohydrate, phenols, and proteins) and inorganic materials (Aluminum, iron, potassium, sodium and zinc).

Actions:

- Approved indication by German Commission E:
 - 1- Skin and mucous membrane inflammations
 - 2- Bacterial skin diseases, including oral cavity and gums
 - 3- Respiratory tract inflammations and irritations.
 - 4- The flower has been approved for use in baths as irrigation for anogenital inflammation and;
 - 5- The flower has been approved to treat GI spasms and inflammatory diseases

Other common uses: Flowers are used for in constitutional debility, hysteria, dyspepsia, intermittent fever, nervousness, depression, headaches and indigestion. Chamomile reduces gastric acid and prevent ulcers. Chamomile promotes tissue regeneration after patients had operations on their intestinal, urinary and genital systems.

It used principally as a nervine for irritability, hypersensitiveness, neuralgias, rheumatism, toothache, during teething, in false labors pains, dysmenorrhea, cramp in the leg, flatulent colic. Chamomile oil is used externally in rheumatism, flatulence and colic. Chamomile has



antihistamine effect, implicated in ulcers and the skin swelling, puffy eyes and headaches brought on by allergies. Chamomile is safe in children. It is used for digestive and hyperactive problems, discouraging nightmares and preventing the convulsions that sometimes accompany children's high fevers.

Lastly, it has an antimicrobial activity including staph and candida. Historically, chamomile poultice has been placed on cancers, and its sesquiterpene lactones show immune system-stimulating and antitumor activity.

Preparations:

Herbal Tea (short hot infusion): It is prepared by pouring 150 mL of boiling water to (3 g) of chamomile flowers and it is kept covered for 5–10 minutes and passed through a strainer, up to 3x daily.

Tincture: 7-15 mL up to 3x daily of 1:5 potency.

Mouthwash: About 10–15 drops of tincture (1:5 potency) can be added to a glass of water and used for gargle.

Liquid Extract: 1-4 ml PO TID; 1:1 in 45% alcohol (or in 70% alcohol). The extracts are further dried into viscous extracts and added to gels, ointments, and creams or to prepare tablets, capsules, and coated pills.

Tea poultice/rinse: Apply 3-10% ointment/gel PRN.

As a bath additive: 50 g are added to 10 liters of water; 'liquid rubs' are applied as poultices or washes 2 to 3 times daily.

Aromatherapy: A few drops of oil are applied on a piece of cloth or tissue and slowly inhaled, or a few drops of oil are added to hot water and the steam is inhaled.

Massages Therapy: The chamomile oil is diluted with other oils such as olive oil, sunflower oil, or lavender oil.

Bath Therapy: A few drops of chamomile essential oil are added or sometimes the flowers are put in a small bag and kept in the bath.

Contraindications and cautions:

Hypersensitivity to Asteraceae plants; daisies, marigolds, ragweed. The hypersensitivity reactions including urticaria, contact sensitivity, rash; application site reactions including lesions (tongue). Avoid during pregnancy and lactation, hormone-sensitive condition such as breast cancer, uterine cancer, ovarian cancer, endometriosis, or uterine fibroids.

Reflection:

I always drink chamomile. I poured boiling water over the flowers and I kept it for about 10 minutes. It tastes bitter, very aromatic and warm. I don't like the taste in general and sometimes I used to add earl gray tea or Rosemary fresh leaves. It is very relaxing herb and I like that. The relaxing effect is uplifting and soothing.

References:

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