

THYME

(Thymus vulgaris)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Expectorant
- Antispasmodic
- Antitussive
- Antibacterial
- Carminative
- Antifungal
- Antiviral
- Antioxidant
- Astringent
- Anthelmintic
- Anti-inflammatory
- Analgesic

Indications

- Respiratory tract problems including bronchitis, coughs, pertussis (whooping cough), pleurisy, asthma, emphysema, sinusitis and laryngitis
- Infections including streptococcal throat, tonsillitis, lung and kidney infections
- Digestive problems including dyspepsia, gastritis, diarrhoea, spasmodic conditions of the gastrointestinal tract, adjunct in treatment of peptic ulcer
- Skin disinfection (topically) – minor wounds, fungal and bacterial skin disorders, as a mouthwash to reduce oral bacteria, herpes simplex virus

Traditional Use

Thyme is traditionally part of every herb garden, even the most modest. It was used medicinally by Hippocrates ("the father of medicine") over 4,000 years ago, and later by the first Century Greek physician Dioscorides, as a treatment for respiratory disorders. It continues to be one of the most recommended herbs in Europe for this indication. The 17th Century herbalist Nicholas Culpeper recommended thyme for whooping cough, gout, stomach pains and shortness of breath. The Eclectic

physicians considered thyme an emmenagogue, antispasmodic and diaphoretic, and they used it for dyspepsia, hysteria, dysmenorrhea, flatulence, colic, headache and neuralgia. The British Herbal Pharmacopoeia recommends its use in children for diarrhoea and enuresis.

Energetics

Hot, dry.

Constituents

Volatile oils primarily thymol and carvacrol; flavonoids including apigenin and luteolin; saponins; tannins; polyphenolic acids; bitter principle; resins.

Use in Pregnancy

Likely safe when used in amounts commonly found in foods. Use medicinal amounts of thyme cautiously in women who are pregnant, or trying to become pregnant, due to possible antifertility and abortifacient effects. Traditionally, thyme has been used as an aid in labour and delivery.

Contraindications and Cautions

Contraindicated in patients with a known allergy, or hypersensitivity, to thyme, its constituents or members of the Lamiaceae (Labiatae) family.

Drug Interactions

Caution with anticoagulant/antiplatelet drugs (such as warfarin).

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 35% alcohol
15 to 80mL weekly