

# Catnip

Latin Name: *Nepeta cataria*

Also known as: Catswort, Catmint, Catnep, Catrup, Field Balm

## Scientific Classification

There are about 250 species of the *Nepeta* genus.

Family: Lamiaceae – mint family

Genus: *Nepeta* – catnip

Species: *N. cataria* – catnip

Influence on the Body	(PRINCIPAL ACTIONS are listed in CAPITAL LETTERS)
<i>Addictions</i>	ADDICTIONS • drug withdrawal • nicotine withdrawal
<i>Blood and Circulatory System</i>	anemia • improves circulation
<i>Blood Sugar</i>	hypoglycemia
<i>Body System</i>	fatigue • stress • tension • stimulant (increases internal heat, dispels internal chill and strengthens metabolism and circulation)
<i>Digestive Tract</i>	aperitive (improves the appetite) • aromatic (has volatile oils which aid digestion and relieve gas) • bitter (stimulates digestive juices and improves appetite) • DIGESTION • indigestion • nausea • ACID STOMACH • STOMACHIC • upset stomach • vomiting • DIARRHEA • constipation • ENEMA • COLIC • relieves GAS • hemorrhoids • expels worms
<i>Infections and Immune System</i>	COLDS • coughs • ADULT AND CHILD FEVERS • REFRIGERANT (produces coolness and reduces fever) • FLU • CHILDHOOD DISEASES • MEASLES • MUMPS • CHICKEN POX (prevention) • smallpox
<i>Inflammation</i>	inflammation
<i>Liver</i>	liver
<i>Lungs and Respiratory System</i>	bronchitis • hiccups • lung congestion • CROUP
<i>Muscles</i>	ACHES • muscular cramps

<i>Nervous System</i>	NERVOUSNESS • nervous headaches • dizziness • shock • restlessness • sedative (calms and exerts soothing or tranquilizing effect) • RELAXANT (relaxes nerves and muscles, relieves tension) • INSOMNIA • SLEEPLESSNESS • SPASMS • CONVULSIONS • epilepsy • hysteria • insanity • mental illness
<i>Pain</i>	PAIN RELIEVER • toothache
<i>Reproductive System</i>	<i>Female:</i> • stimulates menstruation • menstrual cramps • infertility • amenorrhea (menstrual failure) • MORNING SICKNESS • uterine problems • MISCARRIAGE (helps prevent)
<i>Skin, Tissues &amp; Hair</i>	skin problems • external sores • ACNE
<i>Urinary Tract</i>	bladder • water retention • kidney stones
<i>Other Uses</i>	CAT STIMULANT • insect repellent (MOSQUITOES and cockroaches)

**Key properties:**

- DIGESTIVE AID – relieves gas and intestinal spasms, improves appetite and increases peristalsis
- Specific for CHILDHOOD DISEASES
- RELAXANT – relaxes nerves and muscles; relieves tension
- DIAPHORETIC – increases perspiration
- nervine – improves nerve function

**Primarily affecting: NERVES • INTESTINES**

<b>History</b>	<p>Catnip is in the mint family. In Elizabethan England it was called cat mint and was the most popular tea before black tea was introduced. Catnip tea has a very pleasant smell and taste and is calming to the nerves. Europeans also used catnip tea for bronchitis and diarrhea.</p> <p>Culpepper (1616-1654) mentions catnip as a topical aid for hemorrhoids. North American Natives used catnip for its sedative effect on the nervous system and for treating colic in infants.</p>
<b>Attributes</b>	<b><u>Key Components:</u> (including, but not limited to)</b>
<i>Nutrition</i>	Vitamins <u>A</u> • <u>B1</u> (thiamine) • <u>B2</u> (riboflavin) • <u>B3</u> (niacin)

• B5 (pantothenic acid) • B6 (pyridoxine) • B9 (folic acid)  
• B12 (cobalamin) • Biotin • Choline • Inositol • PABA (Para-Amino Benzoic Acid) • C • Iron (good source) • Magnesium • Manganese • Phosphorous • Sodium • Sulfur

Volatile oils (chiefly Nepatalactone - for distinctive smell)  
• Bitters • Tannins

*Digestion*

Catnip relieves gas and generally soothes and relaxes the bowels. The tea has a diuretic effect which reduces swollen tissues (including puffy eyes) and increases gallbladder activity.

Catnip enemas cleanse the colon, reduce spasms and increase urination. It is often used as a warm enema because of its relaxing action. Use the tea enema in large amounts to expel worms, release gas, treat fevers and nervous headaches.

*Children*

Catnip is a gentle antispasmodic that relieves indigestion and gas in babies and young children with colic, stomach pains and fevers. It is also helpful for babies who are teething.

A catnip and fennel extract combination are an excellent liquid-form that babies and children can take easily. It is famous for settling the stomach and soothing nerves.

Catnip works quickly to overcome convulsions in children. It also helps to control restlessness and colic by calming the nerves.

*Blood and Circulation*

It has been documented that catnip normalizes blood pressure. It improves circulation and helps to reduce fatigue from muscle exhaustion.

*Nerves*

Catnip relieves pain, prevents spasms and calms the nerves. The herb elevates the mood and promotes a feeling of well-being.

Warm catnip tea is also used as a sedative for treating insomnia, dispelling headaches and sweating out fevers.

*Immune System*

Catnip reduces excess mucus in the body and is often used for colds and flus, especially in children. It produces 'perspiration inducing sleep' without increasing body temperature. The sweat-releasing effects, in this sense, help the body to evacuate poisons and lower body temperature. Catnip enemas reduce fevers quickly in both adults and

	children.
<i>Addictions</i>	It is said that putting several drops of catnip extract on the back of the tongue will decrease the desire for cigarettes.
<i>Insect Repellant</i>	Using nepatalactone from catnip to repel mosquitoes was reported to be ten times more effective than using the same amount of DEET (an ingredient in commercial insect repellents).  Evidence that catnip repels flies and cockroaches was observed in preliminary studies.
<i>Cats</i>	It must be mentioned that catnip is a favorite of cats, many of which develop an almost unnatural affection for it. The bruised, fresh herb may be given to cats to make them happy or to silence nighttime yowling. Catnip affects about two-thirds of cats in this way.
<b>Herb Parts Used</b>	Leaves and flowers are harvested during the early flowering stage, without the stem, and used fresh or dried as an herb.
<b>Preparations and Remedies</b>	<b><i>Never boil catnip. Much of the therapeutic value is in the volatile oil and will be lost</i></b>
<i>Fresh</i>	Chew the fresh leaves for a toothache.  <i>Catnip and Fennel Extract:</i> For colic, gas and indigestion
<i>Powdered Formula</i>	<i>Liver Formula:</i> (see MILK THISTLE preparations)
<i>Infusions</i>	<i>Catnip Tea:</i> Make tea with 1 tablespoon herb to 1 cup water. Steep 5-15 minutes. Drink 1-8 ounces of the tea, as needed. Catnip tea may be used for headaches caused by digestive disturbances. It makes a mild, aromatic tea for colds, flu, fevers, and fussiness in children. Warm catnip tea is often effective in bringing on a delayed menstrual period. Take the infusion cold to treat suppressed urination.
<i>Enemas</i>	<i>Catnip Enema:</i> This enema is particularly useful in bringing down fevers, eliminating mucus, relaxing the colon, easing cramping and dislodging congestion in the colon, releasing gas, expelling worms, increasing urination, treating nervous headaches, hiccups, and menstrual cramps, and relieving the aches of flu.

4 tablespoons Catnip herb  
1 quart Distilled Water

Pour boiling water over catnip in a one quart jar, cover and let steep for ten minutes. Strain and cool until lukewarm. Pour into enema bag with rectal tip and proceed with enema

*Catnip and Garlic Enemas:*

A very effective enema combination is equal parts catnip and garlic together in the same bag. Garlic fights infection, pulls mucus, kills germs, bacteria, virus and parasites, and increases peristaltic action of the colon. Catnip helps ease cramping of the colon, brings down fevers, pulls mucus, helps stop pain, and relaxes and soothes the whole system. These two herbs are a powerful enema combination.

Make catnip tea as described above for catnip enema, add garlic solution (below) in equal parts in the enema bag.

*Garlic Solution:*

Blend ten to twelve garlic cloves in one cup hot water. Strain and add enough water to fill an enema bag.

*As an alternative to fresh garlic:*

Eight garlic capsules or one teaspoon herbal garlic powder (not the kind found in grocery stores) may be used, but fresh garlic is always preferred. For babies, use one small garlic clove to one pint water. See additional information in the Garlic chapter.

The enema solution should feel neutral when drops are put on the wrist. Fill the bag according to the child's size. Use one-quarter bag (about one pint) for babies, one bag for small children, one to two bags for older children.

*How to Give an Enema to Babies and Children*

Have child lay on their left side if possible. Lubricate the end of the enema tube. Insert it a few inches into the rectum past the sphincter muscle – do not force. Allow water to flow until there is a cramp or the need to expel. Children do not take the whole bag at once, their colon is too small. The solution should never be forced. Children need only to take the amount that is comfortable. Allow them to expel when they feel the need.

It is helpful to gently massage the colon during an enema. Somewhat following the path of the large intestine, start on the right side of the child's abdomen, massage over to the

	<p>middle section above the navel, then to the left side, and finally work down towards the rectum.</p> <p>Babies may be laid on a towel in the tub. Allow water to enter very slowly. The baby will expel when it needs to.</p>
<b>Safety</b>	<p>No health hazards or adverse side effects are known.</p> <p>Catnip has historically been used as a uterine stimulant during childbirth, so it is generally recommended that it not be used during pregnancy.</p>
<b>Plant Profile</b>	<p><i>Natural Habitat:</i> Indigenous to Europe, catnip originated in the Mediterranean area. It is now commonly found in England, North America and Canada. Catnip is considered to be a common ditch-bank weed.</p>
<i>Description</i>	<p>Catnip is an aromatic, herbaceous plant that cats love. It resembles mint in appearance and grows two to five feet tall. The tall, erect stalks have very fine whitish hairs and branching stems. The flowers are small and white with purple dots and grow in large tufts at the tops of the branches. The leaves are heart-shaped (one to two and a half inches long) with finely scalloped margins, a green upper surface, and grayish-green underside, also with whitish hairs.</p> <p>Catnip's odor is distinctive and faintly mint-like. The herb has a pungent, bitter taste. The plant readily spreads and reseeds itself, once it is established.</p>