

Catnip Benefits – Soothing Herb for Digestion, Calm, and Childhood Support

Botanical Profile

- Latin Name: *Nepeta cataria*
- Alternative Names: Catmint, Field Balm
- Plant Family: Lamiaceae (Mint family)
- Parts Used: Aerial parts (leaves, flowers, stems)
- Origin: Native to Europe and Asia; naturalised in North America

Catnip is a gentle, mint-family herb known for its calming effects on both digestion and the nervous system. While famous for its euphoric impact on cats, its medicine for humans is soothing, warm, and nurturing—especially for children, sensitive constitutions, and tense bellies. At Peridotflow Wellness Centre, we turn to Catnip as a softening remedy for frayed nerves, colicky tummies, and emotional agitation that needs gentle unwinding.

Soothes Infant Colic and Childhood Tension

Catnip is one of the safest and most effective herbs for easing digestive discomfort and emotional distress in infants and children. It helps relieve colic, teething pain, restlessness, and nightmares. Its warming, antispasmodic action relaxes the gut and settles the nervous system. Traditionally given as a mild tea or glycerite, Catnip gently helps children release tension, promoting calm and restful sleep without sedation.

Relieves Digestive Upset and Gas

Catnip's carminative and antispasmodic properties make it ideal for relieving gas, bloating, cramping, and indigestion—especially when tension or anxiety is the root cause. It relaxes the smooth muscles of the digestive tract and warms the belly, helping the body process food with ease. It's particularly useful after overeating, during travel, or when digestive discomfort accompanies emotional stress.

Calms Anxiety and Emotional Agitation

As a gentle nervine, Catnip helps calm racing thoughts, ease irritability, and soothe overstimulation. It is ideal for people who hold their stress in the belly or experience emotional reactivity. Its light sedative effect brings clarity and peace, helping to restore the parasympathetic nervous system. It's best used in tea or tincture form when emotional ease and softening are needed.

Eases Fevers and Restless Sleep

Traditionally used to support the body through fevers—especially in children—Catnip promotes gentle perspiration, which helps reduce fever naturally without suppression. It also

helps relax restlessness during illness, supporting natural recovery and deeper sleep. Its warming, dispersive nature makes it ideal for breaking stuck heat or tension during viral illnesses or teething fevers.

Relieves Menstrual Cramping and Pelvic Tension

Catnip's antispasmodic properties extend to the reproductive system as well. It helps ease menstrual cramps, uterine tension, and emotional symptoms related to PMS. For individuals with sensitivity to stronger sedatives, Catnip provides gentle comfort and grounding. It can be taken as a tea or used in a warm compress over the womb space for energetic release.

Folklore & History

Catnip has been used for centuries in European folk medicine, both as a gentle remedy for childhood complaints and a tea for digestive ease. In medieval households, Catnip was used in herbal pillows, teas, and steams to calm nerves and promote sleep. Its well-known effect on cats was viewed as magical or curious, often associated with animal intuition and protection. Herbalists in the 18th and 19th centuries prized it as a key ingredient in children's remedies and gentle febrifuges.

Traditional Usage

Catnip is commonly prepared as a tea, tincture, or glycerite. It's often found in digestive or children's blends alongside chamomile, fennel, or lemon balm. Aerial parts are best harvested just before or during flowering for optimal potency. Infusions are mild and pleasant, suitable for daily use when soothing or warming is needed.

Herbal Actions

Nervine, Antispasmodic, Carminative, Diaphoretic (mild), Sedative (mild), Emmenagogue (mild), Febrifuge

Energetics & Tissue States

Temperature: Warming

Moisture: Drying

Tissue States: Tense, Cold, Damp, Stagnant

Active Compounds

- Volatile oils (including nepetalactone) – Calming and antispasmodic
- Tannins – Astringent and protective

- Flavonoids – Anti-inflammatory and relaxing
- Bitter compounds – Aid digestion

Dosage & Preparation

- Tea: 1–2 tsp dried herb per cup, steep 10 minutes; drink 1–3x daily
- Tincture: 1–3 ml up to 3x daily
- Glycerite (for children): 5–10 drops as needed for calming or digestive support

Safety & Contraindications

- Very safe for all ages, including infants and the elderly
- Not recommended in pregnancy due to mild emmenagogue action
- Use with caution in extremely dry constitutions as it may be slightly drying over time

Herbal Pairings

- Chamomile – for enhanced digestive and emotional soothing
- Fennel – for gas and colic in children
- Lemon Balm – for uplifting calm and antiviral support
- Skullcap – for adults needing deeper nervous system release
- Ginger – to support digestive warmth and circulation

Peridotflow Perspective

Catnip is the whisper of reassurance in a loud world. At Peridotflow, we see Catnip as the herbal ally for the inner child—bringing comfort to the gut, peace to the mind, and gentle holding to the heart. It is a medicine of soft exhale, perfect for sensitive souls, weary parents, and children in need of calm. Whether held in a tea, a tincture, or a mother's hand, Catnip carries the vibration of trust and tender settling.