Oil of Oregano: A Powerhouse for the Alternative Medicine Cabinet  
By Barbara L. Minton – November 3, 2008

Oregano is nature’s antibiotic. It may be one reason why people who eat a Mediterranean diet tend to live longer and healthier lives. Besides making pizza, pasta and salad taste great, the oil of the wild oregano plant has been shown to kill unwanted bacteria, fungus, yeast, parasites and viruses. It’s a powerful antihistamine. New research is finding that oil of oregano is as effective against colitis as prescription drugs without the harmful side effects. It is also able to regenerate liver cells.

Oil of oregano is made from the leaves and flowers of the wild oregano plant found growing naturally in the remote mountainous regions of the Mediterranean where there is little pollution. It is a member of the mint family. The flowers and leaves are harvested when the oil content of the plant is at its highest. It has a history that stretches back to the ancient Greeks, whose name for it translates into “joy of the mountain”. They used it to treating infection-related illnesses and diseases. As the dangers of antibiotic use become more apparent, health conscious people as well as holistic healers are looking for natural alternatives to treat infections. They are finding oil of oregano to be the perfect natural choice.

The ingredients in oil of oregano are unique

What is sold in most traditional grocery stores as oregano is not wild Mediterranean oregano. It has little preventative or therapeutic value. Real wild Mediterranean oregano is of two varieties. Thymus capitatus is the variety that grows in Spain. Most of the oregano that grows throughout the rest of the Mediterranean is the origanum vulgare variety. In order to obtain the health benefits of oil of oregano, the oregano must be of one of these two varieties.

These are the ingredients found in oil of oregano that provide its unique properties:

Carvacrol has been proven in studies to be a powerful antimicrobial, so powerful that it can be used to preserve food and render it self-stable. Research has shown it to be effective against candida albicans, the aspergillus mold, staphylococcus, campylobacter, klebsiella, e.coli, giardia, pseudomonas, salmonella, and listeria. Carvacrol provides many of the health benefits of oil of oregano.

Thymol is a natural fungicide with antiseptic properties. It is the active ingredient in Listerine mouthwash. Thymol is also an immune system booster and a shield against toxins. It is capable of preventing tissue damage and encouraging healing.

Terpenes is the source of the word turpentine. Terpenes give off a pine scent and are also produced by pine trees. Terpenes have potent antibacterial properties.

Rosmarinic acid is a stronger antioxidant than vitamin E. It prevents free radical damage and is instrumental in preventing atherosclerosis and cancer. Rosmarinic acid has shown to be effective in the treatment of allergic asthma. It reduces fluid build up and swelling during an allergy attack, and is an effective natural antihistamine.

Naringin is the substance that gives grapefruit its bitter taste. It has been shown to inhibit the growth of cancer cells and helps boost the effect of antioxidants.

Oil of oregano also contains a good amount of the vitamin E complex, as well as calcium, magnesium, zinc, iron, potassium, copper, boron, manganese, vitamins A and C, and niacin.
Recent research shows oil of oregano beneficial to the colon and liver

A study reported in the journal Experimental and Toxicologic Pathology investigated the treatment efficacy of intra-rectal and intra-peritoneal application of oregano oil on induced colitis in rats using a morphological damage score. They found a significant difference in terms of ulceration, mucus cell depletion, inflammatory cell infiltration, vascular dilatation, crypt abscesses, and edema between the group given oregano oil compared to the control group.

A study reported in the journal Mediators of Inflammation examined the anti-inflammatory effects of the combination of thyme and oregano oil administered at three concentrations on mice with induced colitis. They found that the treatment decreased the levels of pro-inflammatory cytokines IL-1beta, IL-6, GM-CSF, and TNF-alpha, especially after the application of the medium dose of 0.2% thyme and 0.1% oregano oil. The medium dose also significantly lowered the amount of the IL-1beta and IL-6 proteins. Administration of the medium dose decreased the mortality rate, accelerated the body weight gain recovery, and reduced the macroscopic damage of the colonic tissue.

Phytomedicine reports a study to investigate the possible effects of carvacrol obtained from oregano oil on the regenerative feature of the liver following partial hepatectomy in rats. The liver regeneration rate of the animals was calculated measuring the weights of their livers before and after the hepatectomy. The researchers found that the liver regeneration increased significantly in the rats given the oregano oil compared to the control group.

Another study reported in Phytomedicine investigated the comparative effects of carvacrol in the liver of rats subjected to restricted blood supply and the restoration of blood flow to the organs and tissues following a period of time. They found that carvacrol was able to protect the liver against defects caused by the event. They also found carvacrol to be non-hepatotoxic at the applied doses.

Oil of oregano is a powerful and versatile medicine

In his book, The Cure is in the Cupboard, Dr. Cass Ingram tells of how oil of oregano saved his life after he contacted a blood borne fungus from an IV needle. He claims that oil of oregano holds supremacy as nature’s most powerful and versatile antiseptic. It is a preservative that can be used to halt the growth of microbes and reduce the risk for food poisoning in meats, eggs, milk and other foods. In his book he lists more than 170 conditions for which the oil may be useful, including treatment for athletes foot, psoriasis, eczema, worms, amoebae, and protozoa. It is helpful in combating diarrhea, intestinal gas, sore throat, sinusitis, breathing difficulties, dandruff, diaper rash, bee stings and venomous bites. It can help reduce fever, relieve cramps, and reduce the effects of measles and mumps.

Herbal authority Steven Foster credits oregano as having been used successfully to treat indigestion, diarrhea, nervous tension, insect bites, toothache, earache, rheumatism, and coughs due to whooping cough and bronchitis.

Using oil of oregano

There is a large quality difference in oil of oregano products currently on the market. Most products do not contain pure oil of oregano. They are instead a combination of oregano oil with a dilutive oil such as olive or flax. Some of these products probably contain a significant amount of oil of oregano, others do not, but there is no way to know. It would also be helpful to know if the oil of oregano was naturally extracted. If you find a brand that tells you how much actual oil of oregano is in the product, the next step is to determine the amount of the active ingredients which are primarily the volatile oils carvacrol and thymol. This is not an easy task.
Supplements of oregano oil are available as tinctures and capsules. Oreganol is a popular product but the oil of oregano is listed as part of a proprietary blend, so you really don’t have any idea what you are getting. It is expensive, so its price may be an indication of quality or it may not.

Bio-alternatives makes a tincture that it says it provides 85% naturally extracted carvacrol, but it is blended with olive oil, so you don’t know how much oil of oregano is in it. A one ounce bottle sells for $17.99. This oregano is the origanum vulgare variety.

Byron Richards of Wellness Resources has done a fairly good job of coming clean about what is in his Oregano Oil product. According to him each capsule contains 100 mg. of wild oregano oil that is 55%-65% carvacrol. He doesn’t tell you how it was extracted. A bottle of 180 capsules sells for about $28.00. This oregano is the thymus capitatus variety.

Oregano can be grown in the garden and processed in the kitchen.

**Sources:**


"Health Benefits of Oil of Oregano From Its Unique Ingredients", Healthy Oil Planet.

http://www.naturalnews.com/024685.html