



# 7 Essential Oils for Easing IBS Symptoms

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## Essential Oils for IBS

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) can be tough to live with and treat. If you have it, you know this all too well. Sometimes, doctors will prescribe medications for bloating, cramping, gas, stomach pain, constipation and diarrhea, but pharmacological drugs come with side effects. This is why some people may use essential oils for IBS.

There are natural solutions that may work just as well as conventional medication, perhaps even better. Essential oils are an option for getting IBS symptoms under control — a natural solution without the side effects.

Here are seven essential oils for IBS that may help ease your symptoms:

### 1. Ginger

Among the many essential oils for IBS symptoms is ginger. Fresh ginger root has been used in Asian medicine for thousands of years. Ginger may be effective in improving nausea, vomiting and gastric hypomotility (ingestion and digestion).

Research shows that 53.3% of study participants found relief using 1 or 2 grams of ginger to manage nausea and digestive function for a period of 28 days. The researchers noted that while participants tolerated ginger well, larger trials were needed to make a definitive conclusion about ginger's effectiveness in treating IBS symptoms.

You can find ginger oil on your online retailer or at your local health food store. For IBS symptom relief, you can add it to tea, water, or while cooking.

Ginger is safe for most people but high doses can result in nausea, diarrhea and cramping.

### 2. Peppermint

Several studies show peppermint oil can help treat IBS symptoms, including pain, gas, bloating and diarrhea. The University of Maryland reported three studies in which peppermint successfully treated IBS.

One study involved participants with IBS who took peppermint capsules twice a day for four weeks. 75% had significant relief from their IBS symptoms.

Another study involving children with IBS found 75% of those who took peppermint capsules for two weeks experienced reduced symptoms. Another study from Taiwan found patients who took a peppermint oil formulation three to four times a day for a month experienced relief from gas, bloating and stool frequency and up to 80% had less abdominal pain.

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You can find peppermint oil at your local grocery or health food store, or online. Just make sure what you buy is 100% peppermint oil.

### **3. Oregano**

Oregano oil has similar effects as peppermint for IBS symptoms. It has been used for centuries, going back to ancient Greece, and was even used by early American colonists to relieve vomiting, diarrhea and stomach troubles.

Oregano contains two volatile oils that react in the same way as anti-spasmodic medicines (medicines to control digestive and other gut symptoms) to ease bloating and gas.

You can use dried or fresh oregano leaves to make a warm, spicy herbal tea. Or you can buy oregano oil from your local health food store and add it to hot water or herbal tea.

### **4. Anise Oil**

Anise is an ancient Mediterranean spice used as a digestive aid. Anise seeds have a licorice taste and contain a volatile oil that aids in food digestion.

Anise also helps with belching, gas, bloating, diarrhea, stomach pains and digestion issues. You can buy it in dried seed form in the bulk food section of a health food store — brew it with tea or buy anise oil and add a few drops to your favorite tea.

### **5. Thieves Oil Blend**

Thieves oil combines lemon, rosemary, eucalyptus, clove and rosemary essential oils, creating a blend rich in antioxidants. These antioxidants may help fight bad stomach bacteria causing IBS symptoms.

While there are no clinical studies verifying the effectiveness of thieves essential oil blend, it is popular with essential oil activists. You can add a few drops into a vegetarian capsule and swallow with water to help support your digestive system.

### **6. Frankincense Oil**

Frankincense oil has anti-fungal, antibacterial and anti-parasitic properties. These can help prevent and reduce bacteria in the digestive tract.

Frankincense oil also helps to reduce gas, stomach cramping, constipation, bloating, nausea and diarrhea. It may also help speed up the digestion process and minimize the stress associated with IBS symptoms.

There is no research to indicate frankincense oil is effective in treating IBS but its use for treatment of stomach troubles goes back to the Arabian Peninsula many centuries ago.

Frankincense oil is generally safe, although there have been rare cases of side effects. When taken by mouth, you can dilute it with a spoonful of honey or a glass of water, or you can put a drop or two under your tongue.

### **7. Fennel Oil**

Fennel oil contains three different volatile oils that act as anti-spasmodic agents to improve digestion and relax the intestines to reduce the chances of an IBS flare. Fennel oil also helps relieve gas, bloating, stomach pain, heartburn, constipation and diarrhea.

One 2016 Italian study assessed the effectiveness and tolerability of a combination treatment of curcumin and

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fennel essential oil for treating IBS symptoms. The researchers concluded the curcumin-fennel combination was safe, well-tolerated and offered symptom relief over a 30-day period.

### **Are Essential Oils Safe?**

According to the National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy, most essential oils are generally safe. Some may cause irritation or minor discomfort but serious injury is unlikely.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not regulate essential oils. While some medical professionals remain skeptical of the effectiveness of essential oils for IBS treatment, many people recommend essential oils for IBS symptom relief based on personal experience.

If you have allergies, you may want to check with your doctor before trying an essential oil. Read about the proper usage of each oil. Many people have gotten relief from using essential oils to treat IBS symptoms—they might be worth a try.