

# Penny Royal Essential Oil

## **Main Constituents:**

**Pulegone:** 85.5%

**Botanical Name:** Mentha Pulegium

**Plant Part:** Flowers

**Extraction Method:** Steam Distilled

**Origin:** Morocco

**Description:** Penny Royal is a perennial herb that grows up to 50cm (20 in) tall with smooth roundish stalks and aromatic, gray-green oval leaves.

**Color:** Colorless to pale yellow liquid.

**Common Uses:** Penny Royal Essential Oil was traditionally used to strengthen the nerves, being valuable in hysteric disorders, nervous exhaustion and externally applied for neuralgia. It has a long traditional use as a carminative, diaphoretic, stimulant and as an emmenagogue.

**Consistency:** Thin

**Note:** Top

**Strength of Aroma:** Strong

**Blends well with:** Penny Royal Essential Oil does not blend well with other oils.

**Aromatic Scent:** Penny Royal Essential Oil has a scent very similar to peppermint. Users should expect it to be sweet and herbaceous.

**History:** Penny Royal is a herbal remedy of ancient repute, and was used to purify the blood, for digestive and menstrual problems and feverish colds. It also has a deserved reputation as an insect repellent.

**Cautions:** Penny Royal Essential Oil has high pulegone content which is toxic, abortifacient, and even in small quantities can even cause acute liver and lung damage. Extreme caution in handling is needed. It is not recommended for aromatherapy and avoid use during pregnancy.

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Some of the health benefits of Penny Royal essential oil can be attributed to its properties as an anti-hysterical, anti-microbial, anti-bacterial, anti-rheumatic, anti-arthritis, antiseptic, astringent, cordial, decongestant, depurative, digestive, emenagogue, insecticide and stomachic substance.

Penny Royal is a grass-like creeper herb bearing the scientific name *Mentha Pulegium* and is native to Europe. It bears the prefix "Mentha" in its botanical name since it smells like mint when its leaves are crushed. The essential oil of Penny Royal is derived from the fresh plant by steam distillation and contains isomenthone, neomenthone, menthone and pulegone as its chief components. This oil is high in pulegone content and this makes it a deadly poison.

It is indeed a wonder why such a poisonous plant or oil has been in use as a folk medicine from ancient times. But again, it is also true that most of the medicines (particularly in homeopathy) are based on poisons collected from plants and animals. It is the accuracy in quantity of doses, frequency of administration, and diagnosis of disease that their use as medicine depends upon. Therefore, before we start to discuss its medicinal properties, one must understand and take serious precaution that this oil should never be used unless administered by an expert practitioner, because many deaths have been reported as a result of indiscriminate and incorrect use of this oil.

## Health Benefits of Penny Royal Essential Oil

**Anti-Hysterical:** Those who suffer from hysteria and undergo sudden hysterical attacks such as convulsions, unconscious violent behaviour, and fainting always run the risk of losing their lives. They should always keep themselves away from fire, water, abrasives, and height, as they are very much likely to burn, drown, cut, fall, and knock themselves unconscious when undergoing such attacks. The essential oil of Penny Royal, due to its effects on the nerves and brain, helps to control these attacks and is particularly useful in hysterical fainting.

**Antimicrobial & Antibacterial:** The antimicrobial and antibacterial properties of this oil are the results of its toxicity. You can imagine that even in trace quantities (mere parts per million) how deadly this poisonous oil might be for those tiny microscopic living

beings (microbes) if it is so deadly for humans. Even a few milliliters can cause death. It kills the microbes and bacteria and protects us from the infections caused by them.

**Anti-Rheumatic & Anti-Arthritic:** The depurative property, which is seen as the numbing effect of this oil on the nerves, as well as its cordial and stimulating effects on the blood circulation, make it an ideal combination as an anti-rheumatic and anti-arthritis treatment. Being a depurative, it promotes the removal of toxins like uric acid from the body, thereby eradicating the biggest cause behind rheumatism. The numbing effect on the nerves also helps withstand the pain of rheumatism and arthritis. Its cordial or warming effect heats up the affected area and gives a more comfortable feeling. Finally, its stimulating effect on blood circulation increases blood flow to important organ systems, and brings warmth to the affected places, while also curing them of rheumatism and arthritis.

**Antiseptic:** Wounds and internal organs, particularly the urinary tract, urethra, kidneys, and uterus may become septic due to infection by the germs. The highly poisonous nature of this oil makes it an antiseptic, since it kills the germs or bacteria that cause sepsis. However, this oil should be used in very mild doses, as it is highly poisonous and an irritant.

**Depurative:** There are certain reports that say that this oil can be used as a depurative, that is, a blood purifier. Certain components of this oil may help neutralize the toxins in the blood. Since it promotes blood circulation, it also helps proper mixing of fresh oxygen with the blood. In this way, it can purify the blood and keep the organs and cells properly oxygenated.

**Digestive:** Penny Royal has been in use in folk medicine to facilitate digestion. This property is also reportedly present in its essential oil and it promotes digestion by stimulating the secretion of digestive juices.

**Emenagogue:** This is another well-proven and well-known property of Penny Royal essential oil. It opens blocked and delayed menstruation and makes them more regular by stimulating the production of certain hormones like estrogen and progesterone.

**Insecticide:** Since this oil is toxic to human and to other animals, it is toxic to insects as well. It is a very efficient insect killer and is very effective if used in fumigants, sprays,

and vaporizers. Insects also try to stay away from this oil. This oil is highly praised and reputed as an insect repellent.

**Astringent:** Traditionally, this oil is used as a gum strengthener, which is probably due to its astringent properties. This makes the gums contract and tighten their grip on the teeth. The effects of its astringency can also be felt on the other parts of the body, since this property induces contraction in other muscles and tightens them, pulls up loose hanging skin, gives the face a lift, strengthens hair roots, and helps stop hemorrhaging by contracting the blood vessels.

**Cordial:** Due to its stimulating property, the essential oil of Penny Royal increases blood circulation, which in turn warms up the whole body, thus behaving as a cordial. This warming effect gives relief from feelings of cold that often result from a fever.

**Decongestant:** The toxicity of this oil makes it an antiviral and fights infections in the lungs. This also loosens the phlegm and catarrh deposition in the lungs and the respiratory tracts, as well as promoting their expectoration. This way, it behaves as a decongestant for the lungs and respiratory tracts.

**Stomachic:** Used in very low doses, this oil can cure stomach problems and can settle the stomach. It cures infections in the stomach, helps maintain the acid-base balance in the stomach by stimulating secretion of acids and bile into the stomach, and also soothes inflammation and irritation in the digestive tract.

**Other Benefits:** It is also used to treat flatulence, ailments pertaining to the gall bladder and liver, jaundice, hepatitis, and tumors.

**A Few Words of Caution:** This oil is highly poisonous to human and other animals. Ingestion in even small doses can cause death. It is a strong abortifacient as well, and should therefore be strictly avoided during pregnancy. It is not used in aromatherapy, as inhalation in small quantities can seriously damage the lungs, the respiratory tracts, and the liver. Furthermore, although several medicinal properties of this oil have been discussed above, most of them are reported to have been in use traditionally and their authenticity is not guaranteed. There are no sufficient research studies or proof for or against these medicinal properties except its properties like toxicity, insect repelling, and abortifacient. So, the utmost care should be taken while using this oil, either internally or externally.

**Blending:** Penny Royal Essential Oil blends well with the essential oils of citronella, geranium, lavandin, rosemary, and sage.