



Health & Wellness Resource Center

Catnip.

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KAT-nip

What are other names for this remedy?

Type of medicine: natural remedy

Scientific and common names: *Nepeta cataria*, **catnip**, catmint, catnep, catrup, cat's play, catwort, fieldbalm, nip

What is **catnip**?

Catnip is a plant that grows 3 to 4 feet tall. The flowering tops are used medicinally.

What is it used for?

This remedy has been used to treat several conditions. Studies in humans or animals have not proved that this remedy is safe or effective for all uses. Before using this remedy for a serious condition, you should talk with your healthcare provider. There may be other uses that are not listed below.

Catnip has been used to treat:

- * trouble sleeping
- * migraine headaches
- * colds and flu

- * fever
- * hives
- * stomach upset
- * gas
- * anxiety
- * worms

It has also been used to increase urination and to stimulate menstruation in girls.

Catnip has been used on the skin to relieve swelling and to treat arthritis and hemorrhoids. It has also been used as an insect repellent.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not approve uses for natural remedies. The FDA does not inspect or regulate natural remedies the way they do prescription medicines.

How is it taken?

Catnip is usually taken by mouth as a tea. It also comes in the form of capsules and tablets, or as an oil, ointment, or tincture used on the skin. Check the label on the package for the specific dose.

What if I overdose?

Symptoms of an acute overdose have not been reported.

What should I watch out for?

Do not take **catnip** if you have:

- * pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)
- * very heavy periods

Catnip is unsafe when smoked or when taken by mouth in high doses. **Catnip** is not safe for children.

Catnip may make you drowsy. Do not drive or operate machinery unless you are fully alert.

If you need emergency care, surgery, or dental work, tell the healthcare provider or dentist you are taking this remedy.

Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about any natural remedy that you are using or thinking about using. If your provider does not tell you how to take it, follow the directions that come with the package. Do not take more or take it longer than recommended. Ask about anything you do not understand. Remember:

- * Natural remedies are not always safe.
- * You should not take them if you are pregnant or breast-feeding without your healthcare provider's approval. They should not be taken by infants, children, or older adults without your provider's approval.
- * They affect your body and may interact with prescription medicines that you take.
- * Natural remedies are not standardized and may be contaminated. They may have different strengths and effects.

What are the possible side effects?

Along with its desirable effects, this remedy may cause some unwanted side effects. Some side effects may be very serious. Some side effects may go away as your body adjusts to the remedy. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that continue or get worse.

Life-threatening (Report these to your healthcare provider right away). If you cannot reach your healthcare provider right away, get emergency medical care or call 911 for help): Allergic reaction (hives; itching; rash; trouble breathing; chest pain or tightness in your chest; swelling of your lips, tongue, and throat).

Side effects commonly include tiredness; headaches, vomiting, decreased mental alertness.

What products might interact with this remedy?

When you take this remedy with other medicines, it can change the way the remedy or the medicines work. Vitamins and certain foods may also interact. Using these products together might cause harmful side effects. Before taking this remedy, talk to your healthcare provider if you are taking:

- * antianxiety medicines such as alprazolam (Xanax), clorazepate (Tranxene), diazepam (Valium), lorazepam (Ativan), and oxazepam
- * natural remedies such as calendula, California poppy, capsicum, Siberian ginseng, German chamomile, goldenseal, gotu kola, kava, lemon balm, sage, saffron, St. John's wort, stinging nettle, and valerian
- * lithium (Lithobid)
- * sleeping pills such as butabarbital (Butisol), flurazepam, phenobarbital, temazepam (Restoril), triazolam (Halcion), zaleplon (Sonata), and zolpidem (Ambien)

Do not drink alcohol while you are taking this natural remedy.

If you are not sure if your medicines might interact, ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider. Keep a list of all your medicines with you. List all the prescription medicines, nonprescription medicines, supplements, natural remedies, and vitamins that you take. Be sure that you tell all healthcare providers who treat you about all the products you are taking.

Keep all natural remedies and medicines out of the reach of children.

This advisory includes select information only. The information was obtained from scientific journals, study reports, and other documents. The author and publisher make no warranty, expressed or implied, as to the information. The advisory may not include all side effects associated with a remedy or interactions with other medicines. Nothing herein shall constitute a recommendation for the use of any remedy. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information.

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