

Epsom Salt Uses & Benefits

What is Epsom salt?

Epsom salt, named for a bitter saline spring at Epsom in Surrey, England, is not actually salt but a naturally occurring pure mineral compound of magnesium and sulfate. Long known as a natural remedy for a number of ailments, Epsom salt has numerous health benefits as well as many beauty, household and gardening-related uses.

Studies have shown that magnesium and sulfate are both readily absorbed through the skin, making Epsom salt baths an easy and ideal way to enjoy the amazing health benefits (*1). Magnesium plays a number of roles in the body including regulating the activity of over 325 enzymes, reducing inflammation, helping muscle and nerve function and helping to prevent artery hardening. Sulfates help improve the absorption of nutrients, flush toxins and help ease migraine headaches.

What are the health benefits of using Epsom salt?

The wonders of Epsom salt have been well known for hundreds of years and unlike other salts, Epsom salt has beneficial properties that can soothe the body, mind and soul. Some of the countless health benefits include relaxing the nervous system, curing skin problems, soothing back pain and aching limbs, easing muscle strain, healing cuts, treating cold and congestion, and drawing toxins from the body. One of the simplest ways to ease stress and stress-related problems is to soak in a tub full of hot water with a few cups of Epsom Salts. Some of the magical benefits of Epsom salt include:

Eases stress and relaxes the body

Stress drains the body of magnesium and increases levels of adrenaline. When dissolved in warm water, Epsom salt is absorbed through the skin and replenishes the level of magnesium in the body. The magnesium helps to produce serotonin, a mood-elevating chemical within the brain that creates a feeling of calm and relaxation. Research shows that magnesium also increases energy and stamina by encouraging the production of ATP (adenosine triphosphate), the energy packets made in the cells. Experts believe that bathing with Epsom salt at least three times a week helps you to look better, feel better and gain more energy. Magnesium ions also relax and reduce irritability by lowering the effects of adrenaline. They create a relaxed feeling, improve sleep and concentration, and help muscles and nerves to function properly.

Relieves pain and muscle cramps

An Epsom salt bath is known to ease pain and relieve inflammation, making it beneficial in the treatment of sore muscles, bronchial asthma and migraine headaches. In addition, it has been known to heal cuts and reduce soreness from childbirth. Mix a thick paste of Epsom salt with hot water and apply to get soothing comfort. Try soaking your aching, tired (and smelly) feet in a tub of water with half a cup of Epsom Salts. Epsom salt softens skin and will even neutralize foot odor.

Helps muscles and nerves function properly

Studies show that Epsom salt can help regulate electrolytes in your body, ensuring proper functioning of the muscles, nerves and enzymes. Magnesium is also known to be critical in the proper use of calcium, which serves as a main conductor of the electric impulses in your body.

Helps prevent hardening of arteries and blood clots

Epsom salt is believed to improve heart health and help prevent heart disease and strokes by improving blood circulation, protecting the elasticity of arteries, preventing blood clots and reducing the risk of sudden heart attack deaths.

Makes insulin more effective

Proper magnesium and sulfate levels increase the effectiveness of insulin in the body, and can help to lower the risk or severity of diabetes.

Relieves constipation

Numerous studies have revealed that Epsom salt can be used to treat constipation. Taken internally, Epsom salt acts as a detoxifying agent for colon cleansing. The salt acts like a laxative by increasing water in the intestines and can bring about temporary relief from constipation. However, it is strictly warned that Epsom salts should not be used to relieve constipation without the consultation of a physician.

Eliminates toxins from the body

The sulfates in Epsom salt help flush toxins and heavy metals from the cells, easing muscle pain and helping the body to eliminate harmful substances. Your skin is a highly porous membrane and adding the right minerals to your bathwater triggers a process called reverse osmosis, which actually pulls salt out of your body, and harmful toxins along with it. For a detoxifying bath, at least once weekly add two cups of Epsom Salts to the water in a bathtub and soak for 10 minutes.

What are some uses of Epsom salt?

Whether you like a relaxing soak or wish to enhance your beauty effortlessly, making Epsom salt a part of your daily routine can add a whole lot of goodness to your way of life. To experience the numerous health benefits of Epsom salt, take relaxing, stress-relieving Epsom salt baths three times weekly by adding 2 cups of Epsom Salts to a warm bath and soaking for at least 12 minutes. For the added benefit of moisturizing your skin, add 1/2 cup olive oil or baby oil. Do not use soap as it will interfere with the action of the salts. Try to rest for about two hours afterwards. If you have arthritic joints move them as much as possible after an Epsom salt bath to prevent congestion in the joints.

As a foot bath, pamper weary feet by adding 1/2 cup of Epsom salt to a basin of warm water. Relax and soak feet for 20 minutes. If you like, rub away any calluses using a pumice stone. Dry feet, then add two drops of peppermint essential oil to your favourite natural moisturizer, like shea or coconut butter, and rub in thoroughly to lock in the moisture. If you are pregnant or have any health concerns, check with your doctor before using Epsom salts.

EPSOM SALT USES: HEALTH

Athlete's Foot - Soak feet in an Epsom salt bath to help relieve the symptoms of Athlete's Foot.

Remove splinters - Soak affected skin area in an Epsom salt bath to draw out the splinter.

Treat toenail fungus - Soak your affected toes in hot water mixed with a handful of Epsom salt three times a day.

Soothe sprains and bruises - Add 2 cups Epsom salt to a warm bath and soak to reduce the pain and swelling of sprains and bruises.

Ease discomfort of Gout - Ease the discomfort of gout and reduce inflammation by adding 2-3 teaspoons of Epsom salts into a basin and immersing the affected foot/joint. The water should be as hot as it is comfortable. Soak for about 30 minutes.

EPSOM SALT USES: BEAUTY

Exfoliate dead skin - In the shower or bath, mix a handful of Epsom salt with a tablespoon of bath or olive oil and rub all over your wet skin to exfoliate and soften. Rinse thoroughly.

Exfoliating face cleanser - To clean your face and exfoliate skin at the same time, mix a half-teaspoon of Epsom salt with your regular cleansing cream. Gently massage into skin and rinse with cold water.

Dislodge blackheads - Add a teaspoon of Epsom salt and 3 drops iodine into a half cup of boiling water. Apply this mixture to the blackheads with a cotton ball.

Remove foot odour - Mix a half cup of Epsom salt in warm water and soak your feet for 10 minutes to remove bad odour, soothe achy feet, and soften rough skin.

Remove hairspray - Combine 1 gallon of water, 1 cup of lemon juice, and 1 cup Epsom salt. Cover the mixture and let set for 24 hours. The next day, pour the mixture into your dry hair and leave on for 20 minutes before shampooing as normal.

Hair volumizer - Combine equal parts deep conditioner and Epsom salt and warm in a pan. Work the warm mixture through your hair and leave on for 20 minutes. Rinse thoroughly.

EPSOM SALT USES: HOUSEHOLD

Clean bathroom tiles - Mix equal parts Epsom salt and liquid dish detergent and use as a scrub on bathroom tile.

Prevent slugs - Sprinkle Epsom salt on or near interior entry points to prevent slugs.

As a hand wash - Mix Epsom salt with baby oil and keep by the sink for an effective hand wash.

Clean detergent build-up on washing machines - Fill the machine tub with hot water, add Epsom salt, and run an agitate/soak/agitate cycle to dissolve detergent build-up (*please consult your machine's instruction manual for specific instructions*).

EPSOM SALT USES: GARDENING

Fertilize your houseplants - Most plants need nutrients like magnesium and sulfur to stay in good health and Epsom salt makes the primary nutrients in most plant foods (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium) more effective. Sprinkle Epsom salt once weekly to help nourish your houseplants, flowers and vegetables.

Keep your lawn green - Magnesium sulfate crystals, when added to the soil, provide vital nutrients that help prevent yellowing leaves and the loss of green color (magnesium is an essential element in the chlorophyll molecule) in plants. Add 2 tablespoons of Epsom salt to a gallon of water and sprinkle on your lawn to keep the grass healthy and green.

Insecticide spray - Use Epsom salts on your lawn and in your garden to safely and naturally get rid of plant pests.

(1.) "*Report on Absorption of magnesium sulfate (Epsom salts) across the skin*", Dr RH Waring, School of Biosciences, University of Birmingham. B15 2TT, U.K.

Source: http://www.saltworks.us/salt_info/epsom-uses-benefits.asp