



# Feverfew

*Suffering from migraines?* Try a regimen of **Feverfew** to help prevent the pain and nausea associated with migraines. The herb has been used since ancient times to lower fever and treat nervous and menstrual disorders, depression and pain.

**Information:** Herbals/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong. Consequently, if they are not tailored to your specific needs, they can do more harm than good. This information is meant to be used by your VHC Medical Team and personal Physician as they build your Total Health Plan. Never attempt to adjust your prescribed medications and/or Natural Treatments without your physician's and Medical Team's knowledge and guidance. Since herbals/nutritionals and medications can interact with each other, it is always advisable to consult with your health care provider and The Vibrant Health Community at [www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com](http://www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com) (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

**Botanical:** *Tanacetum parthenium* (also known as *Chrysanthemum parthenium*)

**Family:** *Compositae* (daisy) - *Asteraceae* (aster)

**Other common names:** Bachelor's Buttons, Febrefuge Plant, Featherfew, Featherfoil, Wild Chamomile, Flirtwort, Midsummer Daisy

**History:** Feverfew is a native plant of southeastern Europe that is now common throughout Australia, Europe and North America, where it sometime grows wild. The daisy-like flower is a perennial that grows about two feet in height. Ancient Greek physicians used Feverfew to treat melancholy, headaches and to lower fevers; Dioscorides is believed to have used it to treat arthritis. One of its botanical genus names, *Chrysanthemum*, is derived from two Greek words, i.e., *chrysos*, meaning "golden" and *anthos*, meaning "flower," and its English name is a corrupted version of the Latin word, *febrifugia*, meaning "fever reducer." Its botanical specific, *parthenium*, is said to be derived from the Greek word, *parthenos*, meaning virgin, in reference to young women who used the plant to treat menstrual irregularities. This herb has been used since the first century A. D., to treat headaches, and the English continued to use it into the seventeenth century to treat depression, headache, vertigo and to lower fever. The esteemed English pharmacist, Nicholas Culpeper, recommended its use in 1649 for "all pains in the head," and in 1772, the herbalist, John Hill, said it would cure the "worst headache." Feverfew faded from herbal popularity after that time, but it was planted in gardens for its small daisy-like flowers that appeared to "purify the air" and repel insects.

Recently, however, it has returned to the herbalists' repertoire, primarily to prevent migraine headaches. The respected British journal, *Lancet*, reported in 1988, that extracts of Feverfew inhibited the release of two inflammatory substances, serotonin and prostaglandin, and its use was effective against headache. The chemical composition of the plant appears to fluctuate qualitatively depending on the origin of the plant and its vegetative cycle, but the principal active constituent of feverfew is a sesquiterpenoid lactone called parthenolide. The strong odor of feverfew is due to an essential oil consisting of camphor, camphene, germacrene-D, p-cymene, linalool, borneol and chrysanthemyl acetate. Other chemical and nutritional constituents included in Feverfew are flavonoid glycosides, beta-carotene, B-vitamins, vitamin C, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium and zinc.

**Beneficial Uses:** A regimen of Feverfew has been found to be effective in preventing migraine headaches and/or reducing the nausea and vomiting associated with migraines. The parthenolide in Feverfew appears to block platelets and inhibit the production of serotonin, a brain chemical involved in the release of pain-causing chemicals. Ideally, when taken on a regular basis before the onset of pain,

Feverfew may prevent or reduce the frequency of migraine headaches.

Feverfew, as a febrifuge, has been used to lower fever and "cool" the body since ancient times. As an anti-inflammatory, Feverfew reduces the body's manufacture of prostaglandin, a chemical that produces inflammation. As such it is used to relieve the discomforts of colitis, psoriasis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Feverfew is a mild laxative, and it is also used to help relieve gas and bloating. As a tonic, Feverfew stimulates the appetite and promotes good digestion.

Feverfew has a strong and lasting odor that is considered an insect repellent and has been used to purify the air around houses.

Feverfew is a mild sedative and antispasmodic that will help relieve muscle spasms. Herbalists have used it to treat hysteria, DTs, nervousness and low spirits.

For menstrual discomfort, Feverfew is thought to be an effective pain reliever, and as an emmenagogue, it is used to promote the onset of the menstrual flow. It may also stimulate uterine contractions and, therefore, should not be used by pregnant women.

In preliminary tests, Feverfew has been shown to keep blood platelets from sticking together and forming clots, so it may be useful as an anticoagulant and to improve blood circulation.

**Contraindications:** Those who are allergic to daisies/ragweed/sunflowers should avoid Feverfew. People taking blood thinners (Coumadin/aspirin, etc.) should not take Feverfew, nor should it be administered to children under the age of five years. Pregnant and nursing women should not use Feverfew. Taking Feverfew with prescription pain relievers or ibuprofen may increase the chance of side effects including upset stomach, heartburn, dizziness, and ringing in the ears. Minor side effects may include gastrointestinal upset, diarrhea and nervousness