

# **Epsom Salts: History, Benefits and Contraindications**

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After a long day on the feet, not much feels better than soaking the feet in a basin of warm water. Did you know that if you add Epsom salt to the bath water it is transformed into a natural remedy that has been used for hundreds of years that alleviates many health conditions? If you suffer from insomnia, muscle cramps or skin conditions, Epsom salt may put a spring back in your step.

One misnomer is in the name. Epsom salt is not a salt. It is a pure mineral compound made of magnesium and sulfate. Both of these compounds work together in providing nutrients to the body. Magnesium is a very important mineral for the body and recent studies show that the majority of people in this country are deficient including many elderly people. It is now being known as the “invisible deficiency”. Magnesium is available in pill form, but also with a soak in Epsom salt, the minerals are absorbed right into the body through the feet.

Epsom is a town in England and is the birthplace of Epsom salt. The spring that runs through Epsom is a bitter, saline water and Epsom salt was originally prepared by boiling down this mineral water. If visiting England is not in your current travel plans, fear not. Epsom salt can be found in most grocery or drug stores and is relatively inexpensive.

Of the multitude of benefits, regular use of Epsom salts has been

shown to improve sleep, reduce inflammation, improve muscle cramps, wound healing, healing of skin conditions such as athlete's foot and toenail fungus, build healthy skin, joints and nerves and removes toxins from the body. Another benefit of Epsom Salt is that it has the potential to improve the mood. Magnesium helps to produce serotonin which is a chemical the body produces to induce relaxation, a feeling of well-being and happiness.

Before you dip your feet into a glorious foot bath, there are contraindications to be aware of. Women who are pregnant, those with high blood pressure or cardiovascular conditions or serious open sores should not use Epsom Salt. As with any home remedy, please consult a physician if there are any concerns about an existing health condition. This article is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Don't delay seeking a physician's care because of what you have read in this article.

If you suspect that you may be deficient in magnesium, a blood test at the physician's office can be used to detect a deficiency. Some foods high in magnesium that may be added to the diet may include: almonds, dark, leafy greens, beans, bananas, fish, yogurt and dark chocolate.

To make an Epsom salt foot bath:

Fill a basin full of warm water and add ½ cup of Epsom salt.

In addition, a few drops of essential oils such as lavender may be added to help induce relaxation

Soak for 20 minutes and Enjoy!



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