

Guidelines for safe and effective use of essential oils

Purchase

- Buy your essential oils from a reputable source with a qualified person who can answer your questions. Purchase essential oils in colored glass bottles. Store them out of direct light. Light can deteriorate their potency.

Shelf Life

Shelf life of quality essential oils is several years, citrus oils and mints are the exception with a shorter shelf life. When essential oils are infused in a carrier the shelf life is shortened.

- Label every mixture you put together to tell exactly what is in it, what it is used for, and the date the it was made. This prevents confusion and mistakes in using it.
- Homeopathic remedies and essential oils, especially peppermint, generally are not used together, unless given at least an hour or more apart to prevent them interfering with the homeopathic treatment.

Children

Keep your essential oils **away from children**, with the cap securely tightened. Do not expose to heat, light or the air. Replacing the caps as soon as you have finished with the bottle will help to extend the life of your oils. Exposure to the air unnecessarily will cause the oils to oxidize and spoil.

- When using essential oils with young children use **one-third to one-half the adult dosage**, except for lavender, tea tree and ravensara on the soles of the feet. A few safe and effective diluted essential oils for young children are lavender, tangerine, mandarin, frankincense, and Roman chamomile

Peppermint

- Do not use peppermint essential oil on children under 30 months of age. The menthol can, in rare cases, cause a breathing spasm and cut off the air supply. (Also not recommended for those who are suffering from atrial fibrillation for the same reason.)
- **Caution:** peppermint stays on your fingers long after you have washed your hands and you could rub it into your eyes. Always apply essential oil with the little finger as it is least likely to get into your eye.
- The mucus membranes of the nasal passages are known to be very sensitive. Best to not use oils in your nose. Use an essential oil blend on the chest for colds and congestion.
- It is not recommended for beginners to take essential oils orally. Safe ingestion requires a great deal of training. Essential oils work in the blood stream.
- They do not need to be ingested to be effective.

Sensitivities

- **Citrus oils may be photosensitive.** When you use these oils on your skin, wait a few hours before going out in the sun or to a tanning salon.
- **Sensitivities to synthetic fragrances** usually do not have the same reaction to high-quality essential oils. Those who are allergic to certain plants like chamomile will not necessarily be

allergic to the essential oil. If you are uncertain, do a patch test in 1% dilution. (1 drop per 30 ml or 1oz of carrier)

- Generally, a 2% dilution is safe and effective to use on the skin (10-12 drops in 1 ounce of carrier) When making a blend for the facial care use hydrosols or use skin loving oils, such as rose, frankincense, or lavender. Use a 1% dilution for the face.
- **Use essential oils cautiously** with those who are **elderly**, convalescing, or have serious health problems such as asthma, epilepsy or heart disease.
- If you ever **experience skin irritation** or accidentally get essential oils in the **eyes, dilute with straight vegetable oil, not water!** If there is burning, redness, itching or anything that feels “not right”, wash with soap and water and apply a carrier oil.
- With an **allergic reaction** the skin may stay irritated and inflamed for hours. Allergic reactions are unpredictable. There is always a substitute essential oil if you find you are allergic to one. Approach your essential oils with respect!

Pregnancy

- The safe use of essential oils **during pregnancy** is important one and knowledge is necessary for using essential oils safely. We must keep in mind that when using essential oils with pregnant woman that we are, in fact, treating two people, the mother and the developing infant. Very small molecules are able to pass through the placenta. The same applies to penetration of the blood-brain barrier.
- **Be cautious** about using essential oils during pregnancy, especially during the **first trimester**. Even oils that are generally safe during this time may be too stimulating for women who are prone to miscarriage. Because so many oils are **best avoided in pregnancy**, it is easier to list a few that are considered safe such as the **citrus oils**.

Choosing or creating a blend can be more effective than using a single species because **blends work synergistically** to help with **more than one aspect** of a condition.

Essential oils are not to be used to replace proper medical care. If you are undecided as to which essential oil to use, consult a qualified aromatherapist who will help guide you in the right direction.

Continue, **to learn, experiment, and use** quality pure essential oils and you will see and feel **awesome possibilities** of healing your physical body, your emotional mind, and your spiritual being.

Resources:

Graf, K. *Advanced Level Aromatherapy Home Study Certification Course* www.aromastudio.com

Kathi Keville and Mindy Green (Excerpted from *Aromatherapy: A Complete Guide to the Healing Art*, Crossing Press, 1995)

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