

## Enjoying Essential Oils—Safely and Healthfully

Essential oils and their effects are powerful! If used properly, they are helpful and therapeutic.\* But like most therapeutic substances, natural or otherwise, there are also precautions.

We recommend that you consult a good book or reputable website about essential oils so you can easily look up their therapeutic effects, precautions, and contraindications. Be aware that there are different schools of aromatherapy, and they may provide conflicting instructions. When in doubt, always err on the side of caution.

We want you to enjoy your essential oils and use them to great effect to improve your well-being. They are generally safe if you follow these guidelines.



- **If you are using essential oils for therapeutic reasons, choose wisely!** Choose only the highest-quality clinical-grade oils. Lesser quality oils have reduced or no therapeutic effect, and they might contain synthetics or other additives.
- **Essential oils are extremely concentrated. Most must be diluted before use on the skin.** Always keep essential oils away from your eyes and mucous membranes. Some oils can be skin irritants or may cause allergic reactions in some people. For these and other reasons, always dilute an essential oil in a carrier oil or base cream before using on the skin. Also check for sensitivity or allergic reaction by doing a skin patch test. Many citrus oils even diluted can cause your skin to be photosensitive, so you must protect your skin from strong light, including sunlight and UV light, such as from a tanning bed.
- **If you have a health condition, check to make sure the oils are not contraindicated.** As examples, if you have kidney dysfunction, do not use Juniper Wood (but Juniper Berry is okay). No one with liver dysfunction should use Cinnamon Leaf or Clover Bud. If you are on a blood thinner, avoid Angelica, Black Pepper, Birch, Cinnamon Leaf, Clove Bud, Dill Seed, Helichrysum, Lemon, and Wintergreen. Consult an aromatherapy book for contraindications.

Pregnant women should not use essential oils, especially during the first trimester, unless under the care of an experienced, qualified aromatherapist. Generally, women who are pregnant or lactating should avoid all use of essential oils.

- **Always use caution with children and never use essential oils on infants.** Always use essential oils in a *highly* diluted form with children, especially those under eight years of age. Never use them on infants (birth through 18 months) unless you have consulted an experienced, qualified aromatherapist. Some oils, such as peppermint, can cause a child's throat or epiglottis to swell, potentially causing breathing difficulties. Always know the contraindications of an oil before using it.
- **Never ingest essential oils.** Some essential oils can cause stomach upset or irritate the lining of the throat or other internal mucus membranes and tissues. A few can be deadly if ingested!
- **Keep essential oils and carrier oils away from open flames. Keep away from children.**
- **If you diffuse essential oils, be aware that some pets may be negatively affected, such as cats, fish and birds.** They cannot process the oils like a human can, so remove them from the room.

\*The potential therapeutic benefits of aromatherapy are based on scientific research, traditional knowledge and aromatherapy experience, but according to FDA regulations no health claims can be made for essential oils. This information is intended as informational/educational purposes only. It is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice or care, and it cannot be guaranteed as complete and accurate. Clients use essential oils at their sole risk. If you have a medical condition, consult a qualified professional healthcare provider.