



Essential Oil Blends Safe Use and Contraindication Information

There is controversy about many of the common “safe use” guidelines in aromatherapy (which for the most part tends to err on the side of caution) because many oils are used in the perfume and food industry without caution. The precautions provided below are commonly followed and widely endorsed by clinical aromatherapists. Please follow the bulleted guidelines immediately below without exception, even if the safety description for a blend or single oil says “no known contraindications”—that means there are no *other* safety precautions. Also please read the Safe Use guidelines on our “What Is Aromatherapy?” page.

The following guidelines apply to both Plantessence oil blends and individual oils:

- ***All individual oils and oil blends should be avoided during pregnancy, especially during the first trimester. Also avoid use of all oils and oil blends with young children (age 8 and younger) and infants unless you are qualified to do so.***
- ***Do not ingest any essential oils or oil blends. Some oils are toxic when consumed.***
- ***Many oils can be irritating to the skin if applied undiluted. Always perform a skin patch test first. Keep oils away from eyes and mucous membranes.***
- ***If using an inhaler, do not insert into nostrils.***
- ***Always follow usage instructions and general cautions on the bottle label.***

ACE Blends Cautions

ACE Unlock (Frankincense, Sage Dalmatian, Cedarwood, Lavender, Ho Wood, Balam Fir): Not for use with children age 12 or younger. Caution for anyone with epilepsy or a seizure disorder. Slight caution for those with asthma or high blood pressure.

ACE Release (Spikenard, Ravensara, Pink Grapefruit, Geranium Bourbon, Rosemary, Patchouli): Not for use with children age 12 or younger. Caution for anyone with epilepsy or a seizure disorder. Slight caution for anyone with high blood pressure. May be slightly sedative.

Plantessence Blends Cautions

Alive & Thrive (Lavender and Rosemary): Lavender’s sedative effect may cause some drowsiness, especially in people using alcohol, medications or other products that also have a sedative effect. Rosemary should not be used by anyone with epilepsy or seizure disorders, and used with caution by those with high blood pressure. Rosemary may cause skin irritation when used dermally and is toxic if

ingested in large amounts. See other caution notes under both Lavender and Rosemary in the Individual Oils section.

Calm & Balance (Frankincense, Bergamot bergaptene-free, Lavender): This form of Bergamot is only mildly photosensitive for skin if used dermally. Lavender's sedative effect may cause drowsiness, especially in people using alcohol, medications or other products that also have a sedative effect. See other caution notes under Lavender in the Individual Oils section

Carefree: (Bergamot bergaptene-free, Rosemary): This form of Bergamot is only mildly photosensitive for skin if used dermally. Rosemary should not be used by anyone who has epilepsy or seizure disorders, and used with caution for those with high blood pressure. Rosemary may cause skin irritation when used dermally and is toxic if ingested in large amounts. See other caution notes under the Rosemary listing in the Individual Oils section.

Clear Mind (Bergamot bergaptene-free, Eucalyptus radiata): This form of Bergamot is only mildly photosensitive for skin if used dermally. There is some indication Eucalyptus should be avoided by those with high blood pressure or epilepsy. It may cause headaches if used excessively. It is toxic if ingested in large quantities.

Defense! (Ravensara, Tea Tree, Eucalyptus, Lemon): If using diluted on the skin, always conduct a skin patch test first, and keep away from eyes and mucous membranes. Strong caution for anyone with epilepsy and a seizure disorder. Caution for those with high blood pressure or asthma. May contribute slightly to skin photosensitivity if used diluted dermally. See other caution notes for these oils in the Individual Oils section.

Feelin' Good (Sweet Orange, Lemon): No contraindications, except may cause photosensitivity if used dermally and skin is exposed to strong sunlight or UV light (e.g., tanning bed) for prolonged periods.

Midlife Magic (Clary Sage, Geranium Bourbon, Cypress, Lavender): If using diluted on the skin, always conduct a skin patch test first, and keep away from eyes and mucous membranes. May be slightly sedative, so caution if using with alcohol, medications or other medications or products that also have a sedative effect. Possible caution for those with estrogen-dependent conditions, including some forms of breast cancer. See other caution notes for these oils in the Individual Oils section.

Perfect Balance (Lavender, Lemongrass): Lavender's sedative effect may cause drowsiness, especially in people using alcohol, medications or other products that also have a sedative effect. Lemongrass may cause a rash or irritation when used on the skin even when diluted. Use caution in prostatic hyperplasia. Lemongrass is toxic if ingested, especially to children. See other caution notes under both Lavender and Lemongrass in the Individual Oils section.

Relief! (Ravensara, Cypress, Lavender, Peppermint): If using diluted on the skin, always conduct a skin patch test first to check for sensitivity and keep away from eyes and mucous membranes. Strong caution for those with epilepsy or a seizure disorder. Caution for those with asthma. May be slightly sedative. If using in a spray bottle, avoid contact with clothing as oils may stain fabrics. See other caution notes for these oils in the Individual Oils section.

Soothe (Ravensara, Balsam Fir, Eucalyptus, Lavender): If using diluted on the skin, always conduct a skin patch test first to check for sensitivity and keep away from eyes and mucous membranes. Slight caution for anyone with asthma or high blood pressure. May be slightly sedative. See other caution notes for each of these oils in the Individual Oils section.

So Serene (Lemon, Lavender, Ylang Ylang): Lemon is mildly photosensitizing if used dermally. Lavender's sedative effect may cause drowsiness, especially in people using alcohol, medications or

products that also have a sedative effect. See other caution notes under Lavender in the Individual Oils section.

SuperStudent (Rosemary, Eucalyptus, Lavender, Peppermint): Strong caution for anyone with epilepsy or a seizure disorder. Possible caution for anyone with asthma. Do not use with young children (under age 8). Do not overuse and do not insert inhaler into nostrils. See cautions under Lavender and Peppermint in the Individual Oils section.

Unwind (Cedarwood, Lavender): Cedarwood is only mildly photosensitive if used dermally. Lavender's sedative effect may cause drowsiness, especially in people using alcohol, medications or other products that also have a sedative effect. See other caution notes under Lavender in the Individual Oils section

Upbeat (Rosemary, Citronella): Rosemary should not be used by anyone who has epilepsy or seizure disorders, and used with caution for those with high blood pressure. Rosemary may cause skin irritation when used dermally and is toxic if ingested in large amounts. See other caution notes under Rosemary in the Individual Oils section. Citronella has a mild risk for allergic reaction and there is slight evidence of possible increased heart rate if applied undiluted directly to the skin.

Plantessence Individual Oils Cautions

Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea*): No known contraindications, except possible photosensitivity. Dilute for use on skin, avoid exposing skin to direct sunlight or UV light (e.g., tanning bed) for at 6 to 8 hours.

Bergamot (*Citrus bergamia bergaptene-free*): May irritate skin if not well diluted. Strongly photosensitive and may increase skin cancer risk if used on skin with prolonged exposure to direct sunlight or UV light, such as a tanning bed. (NOTE: Plantessence Bergamot is bergatpene-free, meaning it is far less photosensitive than regular bergamot.) Avoid use if taking drugs that increase sensitivity to sunlight, such as tetracycline, trimethoprim, ciprofloxacin and others. It can be deadly if ingested in large amounts.

Cedarwood (*Juniperus virginiana*): No known contraindications, except very mild photosensitivity if used on skin exposed to sunlight or UV light (e.g., tanning bed) for prolonged periods. Some indication it can cause lung damage if ingested in large amounts.

Citronella (*Cymbopogon nardus*): Possible skin irritant at high concentrations. Slight allergic risk and slight evidence of possible increased heart rate if applied directly to skin in undiluted form.

Clary Sage (*Salvia sclarea*): May increase effects of alcohol and narcotics. In large concentrations may cause headaches. Mildly photosensitivity if used on skin exposed to sunlight or UV light (e.g., tanning bed) for prolonged periods. A few sources caution that because of its sclareol content, Clary Sage may induce an estrogen-like action in the body and so is best avoided by those with breast cancer or at high risk for breast cancer, or by those who need to carefully regulate their estrogen levels.

Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*): No known contraindications.

Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus radiata*): Some indication that it should be avoided by those with high blood pressure or epilepsy. Toxic if ingested in large quantities. Also may cause headaches if used excessively.

Frankincense (*Boswellia serrata*): No known contraindications.

Geranium – Bourbon (*Pelargonium graveolens*): No known contraindications, except a possible skin irritant if used undiluted, at high concentrations, or excessively on the skin. NOTE: Rare mention of possible caution of use with those with low blood sugar.

Grapefruit – Pink (*Citrus racemosa*): May be toxic if taken internally. Mildly photosensitive if used on skin exposed to sunlight or UV light (e.g., tanning bed) for prolonged periods.

Ho Wood (*Cinnamomum camphora*): No known contraindications, except a possible skin irritant if used undiluted or in high concentrations.

Lavender – Population (*Lavandula angustifolia*): No known contraindications, except that its sedative effect may cause drowsiness, especially in people using alcohol, medications or other products that also have a sedative effect. NOTE: Two small studies found that prolonged use of Lavender as found in commercial personal care and home cleaning products (or a combination of Lavender and Tea Tree oils in such products) may have caused or contributed to gynecomastia (breast enlargement) in pre-pubescent boys. (Use was dermally, not primarily through inhalation.) There is debate about both the finding itself and the controls used in the studies, so there is no consensus about this precaution.

Lemon (*Citrus limonum*): No known contraindication, except that this oil, like all citrus oils, is mildly photosensitive, so if used dermally, the skin should not be exposed to sunlight or UV light (e.g., tanning bed) for prolonged periods. Possible skin irritant if used undiluted, especially in the bath.

Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon flexuosus*): Ingestion of Lemongrass by children may be fatal. Use caution in prostatic hyperplasia and with skin hypersensitivity or damaged skin. May cause rash or irritation when used on the skin even when diluted. Unsafe during pregnancy and avoid if breast-feeding. NOTES: There is some evidence, although scant and not widely noted in aromatherapy safety notes, of the following: lung-related problems after prolonged inhalation; lowered blood sugar levels, so possible caution for those with diabetes or hypoglycemia, and for those taking drugs, herbs, or supplements that affect blood sugar; slight increase in liver function tests, particularly bilirubin, or in pancreatic tests, particularly amylase, so possible caution for people with liver conditions.

Patchouli – Light (*Pogostemon cablin*): No known contraindications, except for ingestion, which may be toxic; also mild photosensitivity when used on skin exposed to sunlight or UV light (e.g., tanning bed) for prolonged periods.

Peppermint – Supreme (*Mentha piperita*): No known contraindications, except possible mucous membrane irritation if used dermally. NOTE: Peppermint oil is used in medications and foods, so it is ingested in many forms in small amounts. The known contraindications—some very serious, including neurotoxicity—come from ingesting Peppermint oil in capsule or other “therapeutic” form, not from inhaling it. However, because peppermint contains the chemical menthol, the oil should not be inhaled by children. There have been rare cases where young children experienced swelling of the throat and had difficulty breathing or stopped breathing after periods of inhaling peppermint oil. There also are occasional cautions about using this oil with anyone who has epilepsy. It also may interfere with the efficacy of homeopathic preparations.

Ravensara – Wild (*Ravensara aromatica*): No known contraindications, except possible caution for those with asthma. NOTE: There is widespread academic and aromatherapy confusion about the difference between Ravensara and Ravintsara. You can review the discussion online.

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*): Strong caution for use with anyone who has epilepsy or seizure disorders. Possible caution for those with high blood pressure. May cause skin irritation when used dermally. Toxic if ingested in large amounts. NOTES: Some medical research (single studies and weak evidence) suggest that Rosemary, especially if taken internally or if the herb itself is consumed in large amounts, may have: 1) an anti-coagulant effect and so should be avoided by people on blood thinners, 2) may be an ACE inhibitor so should be avoided by those with high blood pressure who are on certain types of medication, 3) may act as a diuretic so should be avoided by those already using diuretics or taking lithium, and 4) may alter blood sugar levels so should be avoided by diabetics. The evidence is

unclear if inhalation has the same effects, but caution is advised even though the evidence is not substantial.

Sage Dalmatian (*Salvia officinalis*): Use any sage oil with extreme caution and only for short periods of time. Sage oils should be avoided by anyone with epilepsy, a seizure disorder or high blood pressure. It may lower blood sugar, so should be avoided by diabetics. Sage oils when used dermally should be highly diluted and used sparingly. Do not ingest sage oil in any form—it can cause convulsions, liver problems and nervous system problems when used in high concentrations (typically more than would be consumed in food) and with prolonged use (for more than 4 months). It is best to consult a certified aromatherapist before using this individual oil. If this oil is used in a blend, it should be used in low concentrations and for inhalation only.

Sweet Orange (*Citrus sinensis*): No known contraindications except for photosensitivity, so use on skin diluted and keep skin out of direct sunlight or UV light (e.g., tanning bed) for prolonged periods.

Tea Tree (*Malaleuca alternifolia*): No known contraindications, except possible dermal irritant in some people even when used diluted. Toxic if ingested, and especially so for children. NOTE: A few small studies found that a combination of Lavender and Tea Tree when used in home care or personal care products over time may have caused or contributed to gynecomastia (breast enlargement) in pre-pubescent boys. The study protocols and findings have been called into question, and Lavender more so than Tea Tree was thought to be the contributing factor.

Ylang Ylang (*Cananga odorata*): No known contraindications, except mild possibility of headaches or nausea with overuse and of skin irritation with dermal use.

This information is for educational purposes only, and it is not intended to treat, cure, prevent or diagnose any disease or condition. Nor is it intended to prescribe in any way. If you have a medical condition, consult a professional healthcare provider.

This information is a brief description of the common and traditional uses of and cautions about the essential oils listed and its accuracy and completeness cannot be guaranteed.