

Aromatherapy/Essential Oil Safety Information

Essential oils are renowned for their immune-supporting and emotion-balancing qualities. When used safely, aromatherapy is a simple and delightful way to support health. **In order to ensure safe use of essential oils, please take note of the following precautions:**

1. The following essential oils should not be used with anyone suspected of being **vulnerable to epileptic seizures**: Western red cedar, Wormwood, Genipi, Hyssop, Sage, Thuja, Pennyroyal, Buchu, Calamint, Tansy, Mugwort, Layana, Ho leaf, Boldo, Wintergreen, Birch, Rosemary, Yarrow, Lavandin, Feverfew, and Spike Lavender. (Tisserand and Young p.134, table 10.2)
2. Essential oils should be used very cautiously **during pregnancy and while breastfeeding**. Essential oils should be used during these times only at a 1% dilution and only under guidance of an Aromatherapist or medical professional knowledgeable about essential oils. There are approximately 50 essential oils that are *contraindicated* during pregnancy and another 15 that should be *restricted* during pregnancy and lactation. See Tisserand and Young charts p.152-153 and p.156.
3. **High blood pressure**: Tisserand and Young state that there is no evidence to support the contraindication of topical use of essential oils. (Tisserand and Young p.658)
4. In general, we recommend diluting essential oils in carrier oils before applying them to the skin. For general use, we recommend a total of 5-18 drops of essential oil in 1 oz. of carrier oil. If an essential oil or blend causes irritation on your skin, immediately wash it off with soap and water, and then apply carrier oil to the affected area.
5. **For children, elders, pregnant women and those with serious health conditions**, essential oils need to be diluted to a maximum of 1%, (a total of five to six drops of essential oil to 1 oz. of carrier oil). Direct inhalation should be avoided for children of 5 or less. Ambient inhalation is generally safe (oils that have been diffused in the air). Birch or Wintergreen should not be used on or given to children in any amount due to risk of developing Reye's syndrome. (Tisserand and Young p.656)
6. **We do not recommend the use of essential oils directly on the fur or skin of animals**. Small animals can have toxic reactions to essential oils being applied to their fur or skin.



7. Phototoxic: Bergamot, Lemon, cold pressed Lime, Grapefruit, Bitter Orange, Mandarin leaf, Cumin, Angelica root, Laurel leaf absolute, Rue and Taget. Sunlight or tanning bed rays must be avoided for at least 12-18 hours after application. These oils applied to the skin at any dilution will likely increase the chance of severe burns from ultraviolet light. (Tisserand and Young p.659)
8. **Do not put essential oils in or around the eyes, the ears or other orifices.** If essential oil does contact these areas, immediately flush with carrier oil and wipe off excess. If irritation persists, seek medical advice.
9. Persons who have asthma and allergies should proceed cautiously with essential oils.
10. Persons who have sensitivities to perfumes, or multiple chemical sensitivities should proceed cautiously with essential oils. (Tisserand and Young p.658)
11. Cancer treatment: Because of possible and unpredictable effects on immune mechanisms, we recommend that essential oils are avoided from one week before to one month following a course of chemotherapy or radiotherapy. (Tisserand and Young p.656)
12. Keep all essential oils out of the reach of children. They can be poisonous if swallowed.
13. Essential oils may be safely used internally if you have appropriate medical guidance by a trained clinical Aromatherapist who understands pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetics, appropriate formulation techniques and the safety issues related to each route of application.

Special thanks to Robert Tisserand and Rodney Young's book, Essential Oil Safety (second edition) and Aromahead Institute, School of Essential Oil Studies.

