

IAAMA
National Aromatherapy Awareness Week

FACTS SHEET 5

USING ESSENTIAL OILS SAFELY

Aromatherapy involves the use of essential oils to improve one's health and wellbeing. Essential oils are highly concentrated liquids that can be powerfully therapeutic when used correctly. Conversely, they can be very harmful if not used carefully and with respect.

Implementing aromatherapy into your lifestyle can be a wonderful way to promote positive health for yourself and your family.

- **Essential oils should not be applied undiluted on the skin.** This is because essential oils are highly concentrated. Direct application on the skin can cause severe irritation or sensitivity. The only two exceptions are lavender and tea tree. Diluting an essential oil means mixing it with a quality carrier such as sweet almond oil, macadamia oil or a hand cream base.
- **Always use essential oils in the correct dosage.** If in doubt, check with your Aromatherapist.
- **Some oils can cause skin sensitisation or allergic reactions.** When using essential oils it is best to test on a small area of your skin first. Place a small amount of the diluted essential oil on the inside of your elbow and wait 24 hours to see if there is any form of reaction. Diluting an essential oil means adding 1-2 drops in a teaspoon of carrier oil such as sweet almond oil.
- **If you are pregnant, or suffer from a condition such as epilepsy, or with other health conditions, please consult a qualified Aromatherapist for safe application guidelines.**
- **Less is Best.** When using essential oils, use the smallest amount of essential oils that will get the desired result. A small amount of essential oil goes a long way.
- **Some essential oils are considered hazardous.** These include horseradish, wormwood, sassafras, camphor, wintergreen, pennyroyal, rue, onion, and bitter almond. Again, consult with your Aromatherapist for more information.
- **Store essential oils in a dry, dark and cool place away from heat and light.** Essential oils tend to evaporate and lose their strength if not stored correctly. Essential oils are flammable and should be kept away from a flame.
- **Some people require lower dilutions.** When using essential oils on children, the elderly or women who are pregnant, it is important to use a dilution of around 2%. That is, use no more than 20 drops in a 100 ml carrier.
- **Keep your essential oils away from children.** Treat the oils like medicines that are poison in unknowing hands and ensure they are kept out of reach.
- **Essential oils should not be taken internally.** Essential oils should only be taken internally after receiving a detailed consultation and prescription from a trained and qualified aromatherapy practitioner trained in Aromatic medicine.

Your local Aromatherapist can provide you with more information

For more information contact your local Aromatherapist:

To find a qualified Aromatherapist in your area or for more information contact the International Association of Aromatic Medicine and Aromatherapy (IAAMA) - Phone 02 9715 6622.