

What is Aromatherapy?

Aromatherapy uses essential oils from plants for healing. The oils can be inhaled. They can also be rubbed into the skin. They are rarely taken in by mouth.



WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL OILS?

Essential oils are from the roots, leaves, seeds, or blossoms of plants. Each essential oil contains its own mix of active ingredients. The mix determines what it is used for. Some oils are used for physical healing. Others are used for emotional healing.

WHAT IS AROMATHERAPY GOOD FOR?

A health professional may use aromatherapy to help you. You also can use it to take better care of yourself. Essential oils could help with pain, mood, and relaxation. Different people like different scents. If you don't like the smell of an oil, try a different one. Conditions for which essential oils could help:

Condition	Essential Oils
Agitation, possibly including agitation related to dementia	Lavender and orange, used along with massage
Anxiety	Various mixes: bergamot, cedarwood and lavender; lavender only; orange and lavender; lavender and rosemary
Constipation	Lemon, peppermint and rosemary (with abdominal massage)
Depression	Bergamot, geranium, jasmine, lavender, lemon, rose. Note: Most studies looked at the use of essential oils and massage together.
Sleep disorders	Lavender, cypress, chamomile
Nausea, Vomiting	Ginger oil
Pain	Some studies suggest that people with rheumatoid arthritis, cancer (using topical chamomile), and headaches (using topical peppermint) require fewer pain medications when they use aromatherapy
Itching, a common side effect for those receiving dialysis	Lavender, mint, and tea tree oils
Premenstrual syndrome and menopause	Neroli, ylang ylang, or clary sage with massage onto abdomen or geranium, juniper, evening primrose oil, and/or vitamin E oil for breast tenderness (PMS); clary sage, fennel, and geranium (Menopausal symptoms)

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS OR RISKS?

Most essential oils are safe when inhaled. Essential oils should always be diluted with a carrier oil before being used on the skin. A vegetable oil like olive or sunflower oil makes a good carrier oil. You can use 5 - 10 drops of essential oil in 1 ounce (1/8 of a cup) of carrier oil.

It can be dangerous to take essential oils by mouth. You must work with a trained professional and your primary healthcare provider if you are going to do this.



HOW ARE ESSENTIAL OILS USED?

Essential oils may be used as part of a massage or they can be used on their own. You can breathe in essential oils directly from a piece of cloth. You can breathe them in indirectly through steam inhalations, vaporizers, or sprays. Essential oils mixed in carrier oil can also be applied to your skin. Only specially trained professionals can provide treatment that involves taking essential oils by mouth.

WHO SHOULD BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT USING ESSENTIAL OILS?

- Pregnant women
- People with asthma
- People with a history of allergies
- People taking medication

Talk to your primary healthcare provider before using essential oils. In these cases, you should only use essential oils when working with a trained professional.



For more information, scan the QR code below, or visit nciph.org/aromatherapy



