Essential Oil Safety Precautions

If you or a member of your family becomes ill do not diagnose or treat yourself; get proper medical treatment from a qualified health care provider. Then you may proceed with complimentary aromatherapy to help you or your family member.

Remember, aromatherapy is not to be used to replace proper medical care.

Essential Oils are very powerful, highly concentrated, and should only be used in very small amounts. The suggestions in this information are for general use; if you are undecided as to which Essential Oil to use, consult a qualified aromatherapist.

Before using an Essential Oil, become familiar with its properties, methods of application, toxicity, precautions, and contraindications; these will be found on the data sheet for each single oil or blend.

General Precautions

• Only purchase Essential Oils from a reputable company that provides a lot number, batch number, and tamper-proof lid on each oil.

• Only use high quality Essential Oils identified by the botanical name and chemical variety (ct chemo-type) of the oil where appropriate.

For example, Thymus vulgaris is the botanical name for Thyme.

There are two different chemo-types of Thyme commonly sold. Thyme ct. thymol contains phenols and is an irritant to the skin and large amounts are liver toxic which makes it inappropriate for children, the elderly, or those who have liver diseases.

The other is Thyme ct. linalool which is non-toxic and non-irritating and is very useful for children.

• Keep all Essential Oils away from children, with the caps securely tightened.

• Do not expose Essential Oils to heat, light, or air. Replacing the caps as soon as you finish with the bottle will help to extend the life of your oils.

• Unnecessary exposure to the air will cause the oils to oxidize and spoil.
Keep Essential Oils Out Of The Eyes

- When using Essential Oils with children and the very elderly, use caution when applying oils to the hands as they may rub them in their eyes.

- Should Essential Oil get into the eyes, wash it out with whole milk or vegetable oil to dilute before seeking medical advice.

Internal Use

- Never take Essential Oils by mouth unless under the guidance of a suitably qualified practitioner, working in cooperation with your doctor.

- Follow suggested usage guidelines. Do not attempt to exceed suggested usage guidelines unless under the care of a qualified aromatherapist.

Pregnancy & Internal Use

- Do not use Essential Oils orally when pregnant.

- Essential Oils pass through the placenta, and the high concentration of Essential Oil molecules will be difficult for the developing fetus to detoxify as their systems are not yet mature or fully functional.

- When ingested, Essential Oil molecules enter the bloodstream about ten times more than when applied topically.

Poisoning

- Even a 5 ml bottle can contain enough Essential Oil for a lethal dose of poisoning if a child were to accidentally drink the entire bottle. Remember, when plants are distilled the resulting oil is 100 times more concentrated than the plant material.

Nasal Application

- The mucus membranes of the nasal passages are known to readily absorb whatever is placed inside, such as the nasal sprays used to administer certain prescription medications. Care must be taken when using this method of application with Essential Oils.

- As reported by Penny Price, serious though non-fatal toxicity in children has been reported when applying or injecting Peppermint or Eucalyptus Globulus inside the nose.

- Reputable aromatherapists recommend against instilling Essential Oils into the noses of children under age of six.
Dermal Irritation

- If a person is subject to allergies, patch testing is advisable. Should an irritation occur, apply carrier oil to the area to dilute the Essential Oil and stop the irritation. Do not wash the area as water will enhance the irritation.

- In children under six years of age, avoid Essential Oils known to cause skin irritation or photo-toxicity.

- With the exception of Lavender, fine; Lavender, vera; Tea Tree, and Ravensara applied to the soles of the feet, all Essential Oils should be diluted when used on children or the elderly.

Diffuser Safety

- Do not use diffusers that have a naked flame in the form of a candle around children and pets as they may accidentally knock them over starting a fire.

Blending Or Re-Bottling Oils

- Prominently label all Essential Oil blends that you make with ingredients, usage, and date to prevent confusion when treating different family members and ailments.

Peppermint Cautions

- Do not use Peppermint Essential Oil on children under three years of age. The menthol can, in rare cases, cause a breathing spasm.

- Peppermint Essential Oil is not recommended for those who are suffering from atrial fibrillation for the same reason.

- If you are taking homeopathic remedies, all Essential Oil treatments must be given at least one hour apart to prevent interference. When using Peppermint, homeopathic and Essential Oil treatments should be spaced at least two to three hours apart.

- Peppermint stays on your fingers long after you have washed your hands and you could rub it into your eyes. Always apply Essential Oils with the little finger as it is least likely to get into your eye.
Birch & Wintergreen Cautions

Both Birch and Wintergreen Essential Oils contain methyl salicylate, the main ingredient in aspirin. Birch and Wintergreen are among the only plants in the world that naturally contain methyl salicylate. Thirty ml (about 1 fl oz) of Wintergreen Essential Oil is equivalent to about 171 adult aspirin tablets. Extreme caution should be utilized when using Birch or Wintergreen Essential Oils to avoid potential methyl salicylate toxicity.

- Topically applied Birch oil and Wintergreen oil, which are both high in methyl salicylate, can potentiate the anticoagulant effect of Warfarin causing side effects such as internal hemorrhage. Similar effect may be possible with other anticoagulant drugs.
- Contraindicated for those facing major surgery, hemophilia, or other bleeding disorders.
- Not recommended during pregnancy, while breastfeeding, for young children, or those with methyl salicylate (aspirin) sensitivity.

Oregano & Thyme ct. Thymol Cautions

- Oregano and Thyme ct. thymol are both high in phenols (carvacrol and thymol); large doses or prolonged use are toxic to the liver.
- Not recommended for use with children under 12 years of age, the very elderly, or those who have had hepatitis or other liver damaging diseases.
- Phenols are skin and mucus membrane irritants. Dilute to 1% and patch test before use on skin to avoid possible irritation.
- Do not take internally unless under the care of a professionally trained aromatherapist.
- Oregano oil inhibits platelet aggregation and may potentiate anticoagulant medications.
- Oregano was also found to potentiate diabetic medication.
- It is contraindicated during pregnancy, while breastfeeding, and for small children.