

Aromatherapy

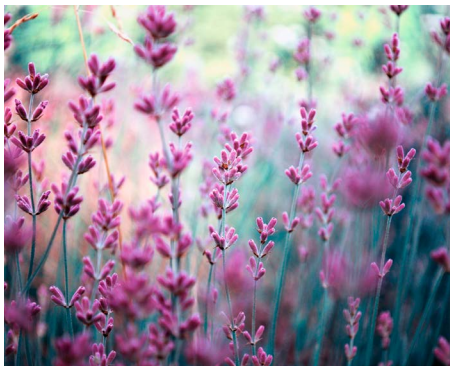
Aromatherapy uses your sense of smell to promote physical and psychological well-being. This therapy helps relieve symptoms such as pain, headaches, stress, nausea, anxiety, and sleeplessness.

HOW DOES THIS WORK?

Inhaling essential oils stimulates your olfactory system. This is the part of your brain connected to smell. It includes your nose and your brain. When the molecules you inhale reach your brain, they affect your limbic system. The limbic system is linked to your emotions, heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, memory, stress, and hormone balance. Inhaling essential oils may help promote relaxation and provide a comforting environment.

PLAN AHEAD

Health and wellness stores likely will have the best variety of brands and scents. Essential oils also are available to buy online.



POSSIBLE BENEFITS AND USES OF COMMON ESSENTIAL OILS

ESSENTIAL OIL	USES	DESCRIPTION
Ginger (Zingiber officinale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nausea and upset stomach• Constipation and diarrhea• Muscle pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balancing, stimulating and warming• Warm spicy and woody essential oil
Lavender (Lavendula angustifolia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relaxation• Improved sleep• Mood boosting• Muscle aches and headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harmonizing, balancing, soothing, and relaxing• Stimulating in large quantity• Floral essential oil
Lemon (Citrus limon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headaches• Mental fatigue• Mind clearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stimulating, calming and mind clearing• Fresh and sweet essential oil
Mandarin (Citrus reticulata)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nervousness, restlessness and anxiety• Improved sleep• Nausea or stomach upset	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stimulating yet calming and revitalizing• Uplifting• Sweet and sharp essential oil
Spearmint (Mentha spicata)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nasal congestion• Nausea or stomach upset• Muscle aches and headaches• Hiccups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relaxing• Spicy and sweet essential oil

HOW TO USE ESSENTIAL OIL

- **Inhale:** A little oil goes a long way. Apply 2 to 3 drops of the essential oil to a cotton ball. Place the cotton ball in a plastic, zippered bag. Reuse every 30 minutes as needed. Although this application has a very low level of risk for most people, use the oil in a well-ventilated space.
- **Absorb through the skin (dermal use):** Be sure to dilute your essential oil with another product before you apply the solution over the painful areas. Consider mixing one drop of essential oil with one teaspoon of almond or jojoba oil.
 - **Never** apply an essential oil directly onto your skin. These oils may cause skin irritation and other reactions.
 - **Never** apply essential oils to your eyes or within 4 inches of a surgical incision.
 - **Never** swallow (ingest) an essential oil unless you have asked your health care provider, and you have talked with an aromatherapist trained in the safety issues of ingesting oil.



CAUTION

- If you buy oils, they should be sold in a dark bottle with a stopper. The label should include information on the country of origin, Latin name of the parent plant, and method of extraction. Also look for the USDA certified organic label and assurance of 100% pure essential oil with no other ingredients.
- While you may like aromatherapy very much, it could make your condition worse. If you are pregnant or nursing or you have skin allergies, ask your physician whether you should use aromatherapy.
- If you have a respiratory condition like asthma or COPD, check with your physician before you use essential oils.
- To reduce the risk of adverse effects, always use pure essential oils. Do not use oils that have additives. Be sure to read the ingredient list and directions on the product to learn how the oil is produced. You may want to research several brands to find the best one for you.
- Essential oils are volatile compounds. This means that they can easily change from liquid to gas. Most essential oils are free of adverse side effects when they are used properly. But it is important to follow safety precautions shown on the product's package.
- Infants and young children are more sensitive to essential oils. Be careful when using essential oils around them.

- You can't use your own essential oils while you are in the hospital. But you may ask your nurse whether there are essential oils in your hospital unit. You may be able to use some oil with your nurse's help.
- Diffusers spread essential oil vapors throughout an entire room and can be purchased for around \$25 and can be useful during your at home recovery. However, diffusers are not allowed in patient rooms during your stay at the hospital.

ESSENTIAL OIL SAFETY PRACTICES

- Avoid applying oils to sensitive areas like the nose, ears, eyes, or broken skin.
- Do not apply undiluted essential oils to mucous membranes
- Always read labels and package instructions before using an essential oil for the first time.
- Be aware of oils with sun sensitivity warnings.
- Practice safe storage — keep oils out of reach of children. Do not store oils in areas with extreme heat or cold.

OTHER RESOURCES

The National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy (NAHA) website includes suggestions for different ways to use essential oils, instructions for diluting them, a marketplace for purchasing them and a search directory to help you find aromatherapy resources near you. naha.org/explore-aromatherapy/safety