

Essential Oil Safety

Aromatherapy use essential oils to help balance mentally and physically; oils can help to relieve stress, and treat a range of conditions from mood disorders to the common cold. They are used in a wide range of commercial products including medicines and beauty products.

However, essential oils are potentially toxic if mis-used. If you are using aromatherapy and essential oils at home or at work, you need to pay attention to the following safety procedures:

1. Never take essential oils internally, as swallowing oils can be extremely dangerous. If an essential oil is accidentally swallowed, seek medical advice immediately.
2. Never use an essential oil undiluted on the skin. Typically a carrier or base oil (such as sweet almond oil) should be used to dilute the essential oil before contact with the skin.
3. Keep essential oils away from your eyes. If you accidentally get oil in your eye, you should flush the eye immediately with water and seek medical advice. If you are inhaling an oil, keep your eyes shut.
4. To avoid children accidentally coming into contact with essential oils, you should treat your oils as if they are medicines. Make sure they are clearly labelled, kept tightly capped, and out of reach of children. Some essential oil bottles are fitted with child-proof caps.

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There are also cautions which apply to individual essential oils. For example, certain oils should not be used by [pregnant women](#), epileptics, and those with high blood pressure or sensitive skin. If you have any of these conditions, always check that the oils you are using are suitable for you.

Some citrus oils are photo-sensitizing and should not be used before exposure to direct sunlight or UV light. Additionally, some essential oils can interfere with homeopathic treatment. If you are receiving treatment, consult your homeopath before using essential oils.

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Experimenting with essential oils can be a very rewarding experience, as long as you pay attention to safety. If you are going to start using essential oils at home, we recommend you buy a book on aromatherapy that includes cautions on the use of individual oils and general safety advice, and if you have any doubt over the use of an essential oil, always consult a reputable reference book, or your qualified aromatherapist.

