

## Aromatherapy with Essential Oils

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### What is aromatherapy?

Aromatherapy is using smells, usually essential oils, to help people feel better. It is often used with other medical treatments, as well as massage and acupuncture.

### What is an essential oil?

Essential oils are the fragrant or scented part of different plants (flowers, trees, and herbs) processed in natural ways. They come straight from the plant and have no added ingredients. Each oil is different, and the body can use it in different ways. Artificial fragrances do not have the same effect as pure essential oils from plants.

### How do essential oils work?

Essential oils are usually breathed in or applied to the skin using lotion or vegetable oil (called a "carrier" oil). As you smell the oils, they can help your body change its reaction to feelings like pain or restlessness. Some essential oils may help you relax and sleep. Others may decrease nausea and discomfort. Aromatherapy treatment is different for each person.

To use essential oils:

- Hold the bottle of oil an inch from the nose. Then breathe deeply and slowly for about a minute. You can also put essential oils on a tissue or cotton ball in a small cup to smell whenever you want.
- To use the essential oil on the skin, dilute it in a carrier oil or lotion.

Many cultures have used essential oils for healing for thousands of years. Remember: Essential oils do not treat or cure diseases.



### Are essential oils safe to use?

Essential oils are concentrated natural substances that can be harmful if not used properly. Some essential oils are poisonous if swallowed, and some may cause skin reactions, like a rash. Other essential oils may make symptoms worse. To use them safely:

- Store essential oils away from young children and pets.
- Do not swallow essential oils or put them in food.
- Ask a doctor before using essential oils:
  - On children younger than 2 years of age
  - For a chronic health issue such as asthma, seizures, or allergies.
- Never apply undiluted essential oils to the skin.
- Be considerate of how the oil's smell may affect other people nearby.

Do not bring essential oils from home to use in the hospital. Talk to your child's nurse if you are interested in using essential oils in the hospital.

### How do I learn more about using essential oils?

Ask to speak to Primary Children's integrative medicine team. These healthcare providers are trained to help children and teens use essential oils and aromatherapy safely.