Aromatherapy: Essential Oils

Aromatherapy is the use of organic plant extracts called essential oils. It can help you feel relaxed, calm, soothed, or uplifted. Essential oils:

- Are very strong. You need to mix them with lotion, aloe, or oil (almond, sesame, olive, or soy) before using them on the skin.

- Are usually used on the skin or by breathing in the scent. This can provide a healing environment.

- Should never be taken by mouth (ingested). Only ingest them if a trained specialist tells you to. This is not common advice.

- Have natural plant elements that make aromatherapy helpful. Other scented products do not help like this.

Using Essential Oils

- Put them into a diffuser. This releases the scent slowly into the air.

- Put a few drops onto a cotton ball or cotton wick, then breathe in the scent.

- Mix a few drops into a lotion, oil, or aloe and massage it onto your skin.

Essential Oil Safety

- Talk to your doctor or health care provider about using aromatherapy before starting. Oils can affect people and medical conditions in many different ways. They may also interact with medicines, vitamins, or supplements you take.

- Do not put them in food or drinks.

- Do not use essential oils full-strength on the skin. The first time you use essential
oils, do a patch test by applying the lotion with oil to a small area of skin. If the skin reacts, such as swelling, itching, hives or burning, clean the area by washing it with soap and cool water.

- **If full-strength oil gets on the skin, use plain oil (almond, sesame, olive, soy, etc.) over the essential oil before washing with soap and water.**

- Do not use them on or near your face.

- Keep them away from items that can cause fires (flammable), like candles, cigarettes, and gas stoves.

- Keep them out of the sun or high heat. Do not keep them in a car.

- Keep them out of the reach of children and pets. Always help children under 10 years old or those who are developmentally delayed use inhaled aromatherapy.

- Check with a qualified aromatherapy specialist or doctor before using them if you’re pregnant or have asthma, seizures, allergies, or clotting disorders.

**When to Call the Doctor**

- Let your child’s doctor or health care provider know if they have a negative reaction to aromatherapy.

- Call the Poison Control Helpline at (800) 222-1222 (TTY-866-688-0088) if you think a child has swallowed any essential oils. They will tell you what to do.