Aromatherapy – Essential Oils

Aromatherapy (ah roh mah THAIR ah pee) is the use of pure organic plant extracts called essential oils. Aromatherapy is used for emotional, psychological and physical well-being. Essential oils are usually used on the skin or by breathing in the scent.

Essential oils are very strong. They are not used full strength but mixed in with plain oil (almond, sesame, olive, soy, etc.), lotion or aloe vera before they are used. Essential oils should never be ingested (taken in by mouth) unless specifically directed by a trained and qualified specialist. This is not common.

Only real essential oils are used for aromatherapy. Products that are “scented” do not have the natural elements of the plants that can make aromatherapy helpful.

Why Essential Oils Are Used

Essential oils can be used to help people:

- Reduce stress.
- Sleep better.
- Feel positive emotions.
- Decrease pain.
- Decrease nausea

How Essential Oils Are Used

Essential oils can be used in different ways.

- The oil is put into a diffuser that allows the scent to release slowly into a room.
- A drop is put onto a cotton ball to allow the scent to be breathed in.
- A few drops are mixed into a lotion, oil, or aloe and massaged onto skin.

Safety

- Do not put essential oils into food or drink.
- Do a skin patch test if your child has allergies or might be sensitive to essential oils.
- If a reaction occurs, clean the lotion or oil off of the affected skin by washing with soap and water.

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Safety, continued

- Keep essential oils away from direct contact with the face.
- Keep oils away from flames (candles, cigarettes, fires).
- Essential oils may interact with some medicines.
- People who have asthma, seizures, allergies, clotting disorders, or are pregnant should always check with a qualified aromatherapy specialist before using essential oils.
- Oils can affect everyone and all medical conditions.
- Always talk to your health care provider about using essential oils before starting aromatherapy.

When to Call the Doctor

- Let your child’s doctor know how your child responded to aromatherapy.
- Essential oils are usually very safe. However, if you think a child has swallowed an essential oil, call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. They will tell you what to do.