

Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy: *The use of pure essential oils for therapeutic purposes, with benefits, which may include relief from stress, anxiety and various emotional and/or physical symptoms. Aromatherapy promotes the process of self-soothing and self-organization (mind, body and spirit).*

Clinical aromatherapy *is the use of essential oils for specific measurable outcomes.*

Non-clinical aromatherapy *is the use of aromatic plant oils for aesthetic purposes.*

Essential oils: *The steam distillates obtained from various parts of aromatic plants. Essential oils are found in flowers, leaves, woods, barks and peels of many plants. The oils contain highly volatile molecules but are very safe when used appropriately. The two most common methods of extracting essential oils are steam distillation and expression. Essential oils enter a person's system through the senses, primarily through inhalation or topical application.*

Steam distillation: *The plant material containing the essential oil is placed in water and boiled. It then goes through a cooler and condenses. The liquid distillate is gathered, and the essential oil is separated from the water.*

Expression: *The peels or rinds of citrus fruits are placed on a conveyer belt. Mechanical scrapers puncture the peels and the oils released are then gathered by centrifugal separation.*

Direct Inhalation: *Steam inhalation is the use of essential oils in a medium of a carrier, which is then placed in a bowl of steaming water. The person then puts a towel over his/her head, leans over a bowl and directly inhales through the nasal passages for approximately ten minutes. One can also place one drop of essential oil onto a cotton ball and inhale through one's nose for a few minutes.*

Caution: *Avoid steam inhalation if you have asthma.*

Indirect Inhalation: *These include room air-fresheners, spritzer sprays, candles, diffusers, burners, and vaporizers.*

Topical application: *Massages, baths (full body, foot and hands), body washes and compresses.*

Safety Guidelines:

- ◆ *Must consult with your physician prior to use of any essential oils*
- ◆ *Always keep them away from children*
- ◆ *You need to have knowledge regarding any essential oils used*
- ◆ *Avoid contact with the eyes*
- ◆ *Observe for skin irritations*
- ◆ *Never use undiluted essential oils*
- ◆ *Pregnant women should take extra care when using essential oils*
- ◆ *Some essential oils are photosensitive*
- ◆ *Do not take by mouth*
- ◆ *Make sure essential oils used don't contain phenol (can be dermacostic)*

Storage of Essential Oils:

- ◆ *Store them out of reach for children and confused elders*
- ◆ *Store in a cool dry place away from heat and light*
- ◆ *Many oils require refrigeration*
- ◆ *Store in colored glass bottles*
- ◆ *Keep away from candles, matches, fire and gas cookers*
- ◆ *Do not sprinkle on top of light bulbs*

Vendors of Pure Essential Oils:

Herbarium
264 Exchange ST
Chicopee, MA 01013
(413) 598 8119
www.theherbarium.com

Northwest Essence
P.O. Box 428
Gig Harbor, WA 98335
(253) 884-5600
northwestessence@earthlink.net

Natures Gift Aromatherapy Products
314 Old Hickory Blvd East
Madison, TN 37115
(615) 612-4270
www.naturegift.com

Elizabeth Van Buren, Inc.
P.O. box 7542
Santa Cruz, CA 95061 USA
(800) 710-7759
www.evb.aromatherapy.com

Compiled by: Marie Chalifour, OTR/L & Tina Champagne, OTR/L, 7/2004