



Nurtured Pathways

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Can you use aromatherapy for babies?

Well, the answer is yes.....as long as you are careful to take a few precautions! We must be very careful when using essential oils with babies, as they are extremely concentrated and powerful. They must be very well diluted before use. Babies are not like adults where a general dosage is often recommended.

So, how can aromatherapy for babies be used?

For a start most babies love a massage! (Let's face it who doesn't?!). Massaging is a wonderful way to relax with your baby and create a loving and trusting bond. Not only that, but there are physical and mental benefits too!

What's more, you don't have to be a massage therapist!! Babies just love any contact that is gentle and relaxed. Massage is excellent for promoting sleep (and that's good for everyone concerned!), stimulating circulation and relieves colic. Massage oil can also help improve your baby's skin.

Here's a recipe for a Baby Massage Oil:

- 1 drop Lavender
- 1 drop Roman Chamomile
- 1 drop Geranium
- 30ml sweet almond oil

Blend together well. Can be used on a daily basis from 3 months onwards.

Ways to Use Essential Oils:

Baths....a single drop of lavender or chamomile mixed well with 20ml of full-fat milk, is plenty for a baby bath! (the milk helps disperse the oil). A great idea for easing crankiness or promoting sleep!

How about putting a couple of drops of lavender on a hanky placed near you when feeding, or near a sleeping baby. The baby will soon associate the lovely aroma with feelings of comfort and security.

Room diffusion is another gentle aromatherapy application that works well. Put a bowl of steaming water, away from your baby's head and out of harms way. Add 1 drop of essential oil to 1 pint (600ml) of water....it will rise with the steam and circulate through the room.

Or use a diffuser - but make sure it is glazed so that you can clean it properly. Add a drop of essential oil to a tablespoon of water and mix well. Put it in the bowl of the diffuser. Do not use essential oil neat on a diffuser with a baby.

If your baby isn't sleeping well then use Roman chamomile. For cleanliness, and well...just a lovely aroma, use lavender. It has antibiotic, antiseptic, disinfectant and anti-viral properties. For any digestive problems (colic, indigestion, diarrhoea etc.) use dill.



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Lavender and chamomile are the most suitable essential oils to first use with your baby. As your baby grows there are more oils that are fine to use.

Here are some tips and guidelines to help you when using aromatherapy for babies:

- It is not recommended to use aromatherapy for babies less than 3 months old without expert advice. They are still developing and adjusting to the outside world!
- It is always wise to ask your health professional for some advice before using aromatherapy with your baby or toddler.
- Make sure that your aromatherapy essential oils are pure therapeutic grade - fragrance oils and other synthetic oils have no healing properties. If the label says not to use internally or on the skin then it is likely to be a petrochemically distilled fragrance oil. Do not use.
- For babies up to two years old a 1% dilution or less is recommended (5 drops essential oil to 30ml or 2 tablespoons carrier oil). After two years a 2% dilution may be used (10 drops essential oil to 30ml or 2 tablespoons carrier oil).
- The most suitable essential oils to first use with your baby are lavender and chamomile.
- Do not use eucalyptus essential oil or rosemary oil on children under 10 years old.
- Do not use peppermint oil on children under 6 years old.
- Do not give essential oils internally.
- When using massage oils don't get the mixture on the face - especially near the eyes and mouth. Don't use oils on their hands as they may be tempted to suck their fingers, or rub their eyes!

**Peppermint, eucalyptus, and rosemary essential oils are all avoided in younger children because they contain chemical constituents called cineol and menthol.

According to Robert Tisserand, in the newest edition of Essential Oil Safety:



Here are some oils safe to use for aromatherapy for babies:

Lavender	Chamomile	Geranium
Mandarin	Neroli	Sweet Orange
Rose	Dill	Tea Tree - for limited applications

Here are some additional oils safe to use with children over 2 years old:

Lemon
Ginger - but only use small dosages, about a third of other essential oils.
Tangerine