**Why Should I Use Essential Oils?**

Essential Oils are functional aromas. Not only do they smell great, but they can be a natural way to help support sleep, mood, relaxation, pain, and skin. Consider essential oils to be a "tool" in your wellness toolbox.

**What are Essential Oils?**

Essential oils are concentrated extracts from flowers, rhizomes, root, bark and stems of a plant or tree. Each essential oil can consist of over 200 individual chemical components. These components are specific to the oil and are responsible for its “mode of action.”

**What is Aromatherapy?**

Aromatherapy is the use of Essentials to support wellness of the body. Aromatherapy utilizes plant extracts (essential oils) in order to support the health of body, mind and spirit.

Essential Oils should not be used as a medicine and are not a substitute for treatment. Essential oils are used to promote wellness and bring balance to imbalances.

**How does Aromatherapy Work?**

Essential oils are volatile. This means that essential oils can evaporate and easily turn into vapor. The vapor of the oil when released into the air travels as molecules. These molecules travel to your nose. From the minute an aroma hits your nose there is a process that occurs. In this process, 4 key concepts are important to understand- Emotion, Detect, Transmit, Perceive and Analyze.

DETECT: Essential Oil molecules travel up the nose into the nasal cavity, where they come into contact with chemoreceptors. When an odor molecule stimulates a chemoreceptor, changes to your brain occur.

TRANSMIT: The change to your brain is caused by a nerve impulse that creates a signal- (known as an aroma print) that travels to the olfactory bulb.

PERCEIVED & ANALYZED: The aroma print travels to other parts of the brain for perception, analysis, storage in memory, and emotional response.

**How Can You Use Essential Oils?**

* Diffusion/Inhalation- Personal Inhalers, diffuser, room spray, patches, diffuser jewelry
* Topical Application- bath, roll ons, shower products, body lotion/oils.
* No Ingestion

**How Should I Store My Essential Oils?**

Oxygen, heat, light and moisture degrade essential oils. Always keep bottles closed and stored in a cool dark space. Do not touch the opening of the oil container. Wear gloves when blending essential oils.

**What Do I Need to Know When Using Essential Oils?**

**Nomenclature for Essential Oils**

Making sure that you use the correct Latin name when buying the essential oil. An example…Lavender is known as Lavendula angustifolia (officinalis). Do not mistake this with Lavendula abrialis, which is Lavendin and has different properties than Lavender.

**Buying Essential Oils**

Where should you buy your essential oils? When making your decision the two most important qualifications are these: (1) they should be organic, unsprayed, or wildcrafted. Your skin is the largest organ, so taking care to limit the number of pesticides it is exposed to is an important one. (2) they should be a very high-quality grade. The high-quality grade is important because some companies will put additives into their oils, thus diluting the oil and reducing the effectiveness of the oil. Some companies publish their testing results on their sites. This is a great way to know that your oils contain what they are supposed to.

**Dilution**

Essential Oils should always be diluted. Each essential oil has its own dilution rate. Using undiluted oil is not necessary and is a waste of your money. Using large amounts of essential oil unnecessarily can also have a big impact on the environment. To dilute, you can use jojoba oil, coconut oil, apricot, or almond oil. For whole-body lotions and massage oils essential oils can be used at 1-3%; Facial applications 0.5-1%; Pain or wounds 5-15%.

Children and the elderly should use much less 0.5-1%. If pregnant or taking medications, you need to be particularly careful since essential oils can interfere with the metabolism of some drugs. It is not recommended to use essential oils with children under 2. Hydrosols are a better avenue for children under 2 yrs. Of age.

**Ingestion**

The average person should ingest essential oils. Even as an aromatherapist there are only a few oils that I would ingest. While essential oils may be natural, they can be extremely potent. Ingesting essential oils without the proper knowledge could be dangerous and interact with medications you may be taking.

**Eyes**

Never put EO’s in the eye. What to do if you (1) get an EO in your eye on accident (2) EO irritates or burns the skin. Use milk to flush or wash it off. Water can make it worse. The fat from the milk will soothe the irritation.

**Allergic Reactions**

Allergic reactions can sometimes happen. An allergic reaction could range from mild redness of the skin, red and slightly thickened skin, red, swollen skin, water blisters to intense swelling, redness, and large blisters. Breathing difficulties, shortness of breath. If any of these symptoms occur discontinue use of the essential oil that is causing the reaction. If irritation or symptoms persist, contact your doctor.

**Diffusion**

A cold air diffuser should be used. Never use heat with oils since they are volatile. The oil will evaporate and or break down under heat. The benefits you will get from the oil will be less than with a cold air diffuser. Many are on the market, I recommend one that has a timer so that you can regulate how much you are diffusing.

Symptoms that may indicate you are diffusing too much: Headache, nausea, dizziness, shortness of breath. If this happens, move to an area with fresh air.

Diffusing all day, every day is not recommended. When you inhale an essential oil, as much as 70% can be adsorbed. That is a lot of essential oil to absorb into your body. If you are diffusing a lot, you are exposing yourself to a higher chance of sensitization. EO’s filter themselves through the liver and kidney, you could be unnecessarily taxing your organs by overexposure. Recommended diffusing 30-40 min at a time. Diffusing all day, every day is not necessary. You risk overexposure and causing sensitivity with this.

**Photosensitivity**

EO’s can cause photosensitivity-meaning that you should be extra careful when exposed to UV or sunlight. Diffusing them will not cause this, but topical application can. Citrus EO’s such as **pressed** lemon, lime, grapefruit, and bergamot oil can cause sensitivity to the sun if applied to the skin.

If using one of these oils do not expose the area for 12-24hrs. Make sure to cover the area that essential oil was applied to so that it is not exposed to sun or UV. (Could cause sunburn.) This is especially important for people on medications who could already be at risk to the sun because of medications.

Most importantly, consult with your doctor or physician if you are pregnant, breast feeding, taking medications, or have a health condition. Some oils should not be used in these cases and can interact with medications. Using essential oils should not be used as a replacement for medical care. It is always important to share with your doctor what oils you are using.