

Aromatherapy and Obesity

What is Obesity

NHS Choices says the following about obesity:

“The term "obese" describes a person who's very overweight, with a lot of body fat.

It's a common problem in the UK that's estimated to affect around one in every four adults and around one in every five children aged 10 to 11.

There are many ways in which a person's health in relation to their weight can be classified, but the most widely used method is body mass index (BMI).

BMI is a measure of whether you're a healthy weight for your height. You can use the [BMI healthy weight calculator](#) to work out your score.

For most adults, a BMI of:

- 18.5 to 24.9 means you're a healthy weight
- 25 to 29.9 means you're overweight
- 30 to 39.9 means you're obese
- 40 or above means you're severely obese

BMI isn't used to definitively diagnose obesity, because people who are very muscular sometimes have a high BMI without excess fat. But for most people, BMI is a useful indication of whether they're a healthy weight, overweight or obese.

A better measure of excess fat is waist circumference, which can be used as an additional measure in people who are overweight (with a BMI of 25 to 29.9) or moderately obese (with a BMI of 30 to 34.9).

Generally, men with a waist circumference of 94cm (37in) or more and women with a waist circumference of 80cm (about 31.5in) or more are more likely to develop obesity-related health problems.

Risks of obesity

It's very important to take steps to tackle obesity because, as well as causing obvious physical changes, it can lead to a number of serious and potentially life-threatening conditions, such as:

- type 2 diabetes
- coronary heart disease
- some types of cancer, such as breast cancer and bowel cancer
- stroke

Obesity can also affect your quality of life and lead to psychological problems, such as depression and low self-esteem (see below for more information about the health problems associated with obesity).

Treating obesity

The best way to treat obesity is to eat a healthy, reduced-calorie diet and exercise regularly.

To do this you should:

- eat a balanced, calorie-controlled diet as recommended by your GP or weight loss management health professional (such as a dietitian)
- join a local weight loss group
- take up activities such as fast walking, jogging, swimming or tennis for 150 to 300 minutes (two-and-a-half to five hours) a week
- eat slowly and avoid situations where you know you could be tempted to overeat

You may also benefit from receiving psychological support from a trained healthcare professional to help change the way you think about food and eating.”

How Can Aromatherapy Help with Obesity

Aromatherapy Massage may assist the body in reducing body fat, but only when used in conjunction with exercise and a weight reducing diet. Particular essential oils that may be helpful include:

- Grapefruit (*Citrus x paradise*)
- Lemon (*Citrus limon*)
- Black Pepper (*Piper nigrum*)
- Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*)
- Juniperberry (*Juniperus communis*)
- Sweet Orange (*Citrus sinensis*)
- Patchouli (*Pogostemon cablin*)

Never take essential oils by mouth. Always contact a qualified Aromatherapist who will guide you on the oils that are suitable for your individual needs.



References:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/obesity/>

The Art of Aromatherapy by Robert Tisserand

Aromatherapy – An A-Z by Patricia Davies

The Encyclopedia of Essential Oils by Julia Lawless

Essential Oils in Colour by Rosemary Caddy

Aromatherapy Workbook by Marcel Lavabre

Research Trials:

<https://synapse.koreamed.org/search.php?where=aview&id=10.4040/jkan.2003.33.6.839&ode=1006JKAN&vmode=AONLY>

https://www.actahort.org/books/1023/1023_1.htm

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