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## Health & Wellbeing



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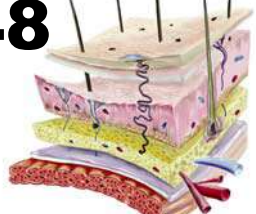
The Leading Publication for Complementary Health, Education and Wellbeing



# Homeopathy

## for babies and children

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# Aromatherapy

## for people with cancer

psychological stress, bring about profound states of relaxation and a sense of peace. Any improvement in the person's quality of life is valuable.

Cancer is a very difficult disease to treat – with different outcomes – and some doctors and hospitals welcome the work of a qualified Aromatherapist, so it is important to first ensure that contact is made with the Oncology Team or persons in charge of the patient and that permission is given to massage. Next, the availability of body areas to be massaged will determine

how to decide on the sequence and which areas need to be left out.

- 🕒 There is no scientific evidence to prove or disapprove the use of massage.
- 🕒 Metastatic spread does not occur just because a tumour is touched.
- 🕒 It is advisable not to massage directly over tumours as the area may be painful and cause discomfort on the surrounding tissue.

the forehead and shoulders could help to uplift their spirits and that would not interfere with the chemotherapy at all.

🕒 Be aware of the side effects of chemotherapy such as: nausea, vomiting, tiredness, lower immune functions, low blood count (platelets/white blood cells susceptibility to bruising and infection), dry and peeling skin, digestive disturbances, altered sensation and hair loss.

🕒 **Be particularly aware of smell and sensitivity – association of certain odours can cause nausea, so it is recommended that only one essential oil be used at this time and to check with the patient that it can be tolerated.**

### The aim of the Aromatherapist in relation to cancer symptoms

- 🕒 To improve the quality of life.
- 🕒 To help alleviate symptoms.
- 🕒 To aid relaxation.
- 🕒 To ease away tension, stress and anxiety.
- 🕒 To provide comfort, security through the caring touch.
- 🕒 To provide an environment where the patient can talk freely one-to-one in confidence.
- 🕒 To give time and empathy to the patient's need no matter how long it may take.
- 🕒 To use holistic approach wherever possible to evaluate the patient's needs.
- 🕒 To allow the patient to be at their own level of understanding wherever it may be and not to judge the situation.
- 🕒 To provide a pleasant but subtle experience combining the powerful effects of aroma and touch.
- 🕒 To improve the immune system.
- 🕒 Transition – letting go of anger and fear, accepting.
- 🕒 Family support – to help those who are left behind with grief and loss.

### Precautions

- 🕒 Consider using 1–2% dilution of essential oils unless otherwise indicated.
- 🕒 Using safe, gentle oils that can be used on children and babies.
- 🕒 Using oils that are soothing and uplifting, helping with a positive outlook and strengthening the immune system.
- 🕒 Use light, gentle, non-invasive touch.
- 🕒 Shorter sessions.

### Avoid

- 🕒 Working directly on stoma sites, dressing and catheters.
- 🕒 Working on areas affected by bony metastases.

**A diagnosis of cancer for most people is almost always a moment of deep psychological crisis and can be the biggest and most daunting challenge they have to face. The feeling of fear and anxiety that people experience may amplify their symptoms not only as a consequence of treatment side effects but also their perception of pain and discomfort.**

It is in these situations, when people need to relax in a safe and supportive environment that complementary therapies play an important role. The therapies may empower people to take control of their situation, enabling them to cope better with the unfamiliar and anxiety-provoking reality.

Aromatherapy, as part of complementary therapy, plays a significant role in relieving physical symptoms as well as alleviating

## Guidelines for therapies involving touch

### Radiotherapy

- 🕒 Avoid areas that are being treated, including entry and exit sites, for the duration of treatment and for about 4/6 weeks after treatment or while the skin is sore.
- 🕒 Encourage patients to follow the advice given by radiographers on skin care.
- 🕒 Be aware of side effects such as digestive disturbances.
- 🕒 Fatigue is a common side effect of treatment seldom addressed.

### Chemotherapy

- 🕒 Although there is no evidence that it is harmful to receive therapies at the same time as chemotherapy, it is thought that patients should only be asking their bodies to do one thing at a time.
- 🕒 So massage may be performed before their chemotherapy but not to have another treatment until at least 24 hours afterwards.
- 🕒 If a patient is having continuous chemotherapy of any sort it might be advisable not to have a treatment although some medical staff think that a drop of essential oil in a carrier and applied to

- Working on limbs/areas affected by lymph oedema unless specifically trained.
- If someone has an infection or if someone is vomiting.
- In cases of thrombosis (DVT) also avoiding work on areas or phlebitis or varicose veins.
- If someone has heart disease such as unstable angina or other clinical issues.
- Do not use oestrogenic type essential oils** on patients with hormone related tumours such as breast, ovarian and prostate cancer, especially Geranium (*Pelargonium graveolens*), Sweet Fennel, (*Foeniculum vulgare*).
- Take care with photosensitive oils such as Bergamot (*Citrus bergamia*).

## Choosing Essential Oils

### For massage

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*), Neroli (*Citrus aurantium*), Frankincense (*Boswellia carteri*), Sandalwood (*Santalum album*), Grapefruit (*Citrus paradisi*), Mandarin/Tangerine (*Citrus reticulata*), Palmarosa (*Cymbopogon martinii*).

### For pain

Roman Chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*), Sweet Marjoram (*Origanum marjorana*), Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*), Neroli (*Citrus aurantium*) – Clary sage (*Salvia sclarea*) **not if uterus pain or ovarian cancer pain.**

### Before radiotherapy

Niaouli (*Melaleuca viridiflora*) – this has been recommended in France, but not researched totally.



**Do not apply essential oils over damaged skin – Aloe Vera is recommended from the plant or in a cream – testing first.**

### Vomiting

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), Peppermint (*Mentha x piperata*), Melissa (*Melissa officinale*) has been very helpful.

### Fatigue

Grapefruit (*Citrus paradisi*), Neroli (*Citrus aurantium*), Lemon (*Citrus limon*), Mandarin (*Citrus reticulata*)

**Do not use – Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinale*), Sage (*Salvia officinalis*) or Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*), for cancer patients as they have been known to have a neurotoxic effect.**

The essential oils recommended for massage may be added to a cream or lotion if the skin is very dry.

**\*\*Please note that patients may need privacy when undressing especially if they have had surgery. CHW**

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