

## Aromatherapy and HIV and Aids

### **What is HIV?**

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that damages the cells in your immune system and weakens your ability to fight everyday infections and disease.

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is the name used to describe a number of potentially life-threatening infections and illnesses that happen when your immune system has been severely damaged by the HIV virus.

While AIDS can't be transmitted from one person to another, the HIV virus can.

There is currently no cure for HIV, but there are very effective drug treatments that enable most people with the virus to live a long and healthy life.

With an early diagnosis and effective treatments, most people with HIV won't develop any AIDS-related illnesses and will live a near-normal lifespan.

### **What are symptoms of HIV infection?**

Most people experience a short, flu-like illness 2-6 weeks after HIV infection, which lasts for a week or two.

After these symptoms disappear, HIV may not cause any symptoms for many years, although the virus continues to damage your immune system. This means many people with HIV don't know they're infected.

Anyone who thinks they could have HIV should get tested. Certain groups of people are advised to have regular tests as they're at particularly high risk, including:

- Men who have sex with men
- Black African heterosexuals
- People who share needles, syringes or other injecting equipment

### **What causes HIV infection?**

HIV is found in the body fluids of an infected person. This includes semen, vaginal and anal fluids, blood and breast milk.

It's a fragile virus and doesn't survive outside the body for long. HIV can't be transmitted through seat, urine and saliva. The most common way of getting HIV is through having anal or vaginal sex without a condom. Other ways of getting HIV include:

- Sharing needles, syringes or other injecting equipment
- Transmission from mother to baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.

The chance of getting HIV through oral sex is very low and will be dependent on many things, such as whether you receive or give oral sex and the oral hygiene of the person giving the oral sex.

The goal of HIV treatment is to have an undetectable viral load. This means the level of HIV virus in your body is low enough to not be detected by a test. You'll also be encouraged to:

- Take regular exercise
- Eat a healthy diet
- Stop smoking
- Have yearly flu jabs to minimize the risk of getting serious illnesses.

Without treatment, the immune system will become severely damaged and life-threatening illnesses such as cancer and severe infections can occur. The best way to prevent HIV is to use a condom for sex and never share needles or other injecting equipment, including syringes, spoons and swabs.

For more information please visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### **How aromatherapy helps for HIV?**

People, who have diseases or illnesses such as HIV, use Aromatherapy to try to make their immune systems stronger and to make themselves feel better in general. They also can use aromatherapy to help deal with symptoms of the disease or side effects from the medicines that treat the disease.

Aromatherapy can play an important part in such an approach, not only by directly working on the immune system with immunostimulant and tonic oils, but by giving nurture, helping with relaxation and creating a safe space in which people can acknowledge such emotions as fear, anger, etc.

Aromatherapy for HIV focus on using a person's body and senses to promote healing and well-being. There are several essential oils that are documented as having antiviral properties such as Basil oil (*Ocimum basilicum*), Cinnamon oil (*Cinnamomum verum*) and others. They are all considered to have a high content in chemical constituents with antiviral properties. In a similar way to antibiotics, different antiviral substances react with specific viruses.

HIV patient suffering with HIV, the immune system is often compromised and in a weak state. This makes them susceptible to infection and disease. Essential Oils that have immune-boosting properties can help them.

Essential oil highly anti-inflammatory properties that can help reduce inflammation, swelling and pain in those suffering from HIV. The inflammation is the root of all disease; therefore reducing inflammation is the key to optimum health. However with HIV or AIDS, the use of essential oil should be complementary to treatment programme and the patients should be encouraged to frequently visit the doctor to monitor their health state.

There is scope for a great deal of valuable work, ranging from emotional support and relaxing therapies for patients, through treating opportunistic infections to the very important area of strengthening the compromised immune system itself. Far more important, though, is helping to improve the quality of life by offering relaxing massage, baths, mood-enhancing oils and emotional support.

Essential oils which can be used for HIV conditions:

#### **Essential Oils suggestion for Immune System**

- Eucalyptus oil (*Eucalyptus radiata*)
- Oregano oil (*Origanum vulgare*)
- Rosewood oil (*Aniba rosaeodora*)
- Tea Tree oil (*Melaleuca alternifolia*)
- Geranium oil (*Pelargonium sidoides*)
- Thyme oil (*Thymus vulgaris*)
- Niaouli oil (*Melaleuca viridiflora*)
- Manuka oil (*Leptospermum scoparium*)
- Ravensara oil (*Ravansara aromatica, Ravansara anisata*)
- Lavender oil (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- Black pepper oil (*Piper nigrum*)
- Frankincense oil (*Boswellia carteri*)
- Rose Oil (*Rosa damascena*)

### Essential Oils suggestion for Physical and Emotional Relaxing

- Chamomile, Roman oil (*Chamaenemum nobile*)
- Clary sage oil (*Salvia sclarea*)
- Bergamot oil (*Citrus bergamia*)
- Geranium oil (*Pelargonium graveolens*)
- Frankincense oil (*Boswellia carteri*)
- Grapefruit oil (*Citrus x paradisi*)
- Jasmine oil (*Jasminum officinale*)
- Marjoram, Sweet oil (*Origanum majorana*)
- Neroli oil (*Citrus aurantium var. amara*)
- Sandalwood oil (*Santalum album*)
- Rose oil (*Rosa damascene, Rosa centifolia*)
- Rosewood oil (*Aniba rosaeodora*)
- Violet leaf oil (*Viola odorata*)
- Melissa oil (*Melissa officinalis*)

Always contact a qualified Aromatherapist who will guide you on the oils that are suitable for your individual needs.

### Reference:

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- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cancer/>
- <https://www.hiv.ua.gov/patient/daily/alternative>
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