

## Aromatherapy and Stroke

### What is a stroke?

The Stroke Association website describes this condition as follows:

**“A stroke is a brain attack. It happens when the blood supply to part of your brain is cut off”.**

Blood carries essential nutrients and oxygen to your brain. Without blood your brain cells can be damaged or die. This damage can have different effects, depending on where it happens in your brain. A stroke can affect the way your body works as well as how you think, feel and communicate.

### What causes stroke?

As we age, our arteries become harder and narrower and more likely to become blocked. However, certain medical conditions and lifestyle factors can speed up this process and increase your risk of having a stroke.

### Different types of stroke

Most strokes are caused by a blockage cutting off the blood supply to the brain. This is an ischaemic stroke. However, strokes can also be caused by a bleeding in or around the brain. This is a haemorrhagic stroke.

A transient ischaemic attack or TIA is also known as a mini-stroke. It is the same as a stroke, except that the symptoms only last for a short amount of time. This is because the blockage that stops the blood getting to your brain is temporary.

### Fast test

It's vital to know how to spot the warning signs of a stroke in yourself or someone else. Using the FAST test is the best way to do this.

- Face: Can the person smile? Has their face fallen on one side?
- Arms: Can the person raise both arms and keep them there?
- Speech problems: Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say? Is their speech slurred?
- Time: If you see any of these three signs, it's time to call 999.

There's no way of knowing whether your symptoms will pass when they first start.

### **Other symptoms of stroke**

The FAST test helps to spot the three most common symptoms of stroke. But there are other signs that you should always take seriously. These include:

- sudden weakness or numbness on one side of the body, including legs, hands or feet.
- difficulty finding words or speaking in clear sentences.
- sudden blurred vision or loss of sight in one or both eyes.
- sudden memory loss or confusion, and dizziness; or a sudden fall.
- a sudden, severe headache.”

### **How could aromatherapy help with stroke?**

Whilst Aromatherapy cannot ‘cure’ a stroke, the following may be useful in helping to alleviating specific symptoms that occur after a stroke.

- Muscular pain due to spasm, headaches: rosemary, lavender and peppermint.
- Stress and anxiety: lavender, chamomile, bergamot, clary sage, frankincense.
- Insomnia: lavender, clary sage, neroli
- Fatigue: rosemary and peppermint

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

### **References:**

- The Stroke Association <https://www.stroke.org.uk/>

### **Research Trials and Articles:**

- 1) [The use of essential oils on hemiplegic shoulder pain](#)
- 2) [The Effects of Aromatherapy on Depression, Sleep, Mood, and Smell in Stroke Patients and Their Caregivers](#)

To find a practitioner to discuss your needs [click here](#)