



CONTRAINDICATIONS TO AROMATHERAPY

In addition to the list below, contraindications for massage also need to be taken into account if the Aromatherapist is planning to use this method of application. (NB: these contraindications relate only to dermal application and inhalation only).

The IFA does not support the use of essential oils via ingestion (i.e. oral, rectal, vaginal), therefore hazards, cautions and contraindications for this method of application are not included in this document.

TOTAL CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Chemotherapy and radiotherapy (clients may have aromatherapy from two days after treatment, but only if the Aromatherapist is specially trained in cancer care and medical permission has been granted)
- Serious/acute infections
- Under influence of alcohol and/or recreational drugs

LOCAL/PARTIAL CONTRAINDICATIONS (applies to specific essential oils only)

- Pregnancy
- Children/infants
- Hypertension
- Hypotension
- Allergies – e.g., acute asthma
- Sensitive skin, including eczema/dermatitis, etc
- Homeopathic remedies when used in conjunction with certain essential oils
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Hormone-balancing oils on clients with a family history of cancer, especially hormone related cancers such as breast, cervical, womb, etc
- Endometriosis, Poly Cystic Ovarian Syndrome, Hyper/hypothyroidism.
- Avoid the use of citrus essential oils and photosensitising essential oils on clients presenting with symptoms, or history of melanoma, pre-melanoma, senile patches or large moles.
- Haemophilia/anticoagulant medication
- Transdermal patches
- Heart disease
- Kidney disease
- Liver disease
- G6PD Deficiency
- Glaucoma
- Pre and Post Surgery
- MAOI antidepressants and Pethidine
- Paracetamol
- Exposure to UV light
- Varicose veins, haemorrhoids

CAUTIONARY CONTRAINDICATIONS (seek medical/professional permission)

- Cancer
- Heart disease
- Kidney disease
- Liver disease
- Undiagnosed conditions
- Post-operative
- Heavy and complex medication
- Thrombosis

INDIVIDUAL ESSENTIAL OIL SAFETY INFORMATION

Information is based upon the latest safety data published in both 'Essential Oil Safety' (Second edition) by Tisserand and Young; and also 'The Complete Guide to Aromatherapy - Volume I' (Third Edition 2018) by Salvatore Battaglia.

For information on maximum dermal doses, please refer to either of the above two reference books.

ESSENTIAL OIL	SAFETY INFORMATION
Basil ct linalool (<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>)	Sensitisation (low risk); pregnancy
Benzoin (resinoid) (<i>Styrax benzoin</i>)	Sensitisation (low risk); avoid use on children under 2 years, hypersensitive, diseased or damaged skin
Bergamot (<i>Citrus bergamia</i>)	Expressed – phototoxic (moderate risk; maybe photocarcinogenic; avoid using old/oxidised oil FCF – avoid using old/oxidised oil
Black Pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)	Dermal sensitiser if oxidised
Cajeput (<i>Melaleuca Leucadendron</i>)	Can cause CNS and breathing problems in young children - do not apply on or near face of infants or young children. Low risk dermal irritant.
Cardamon (<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i>)	Avoid using on infants/children

Cedarwood (<i>Cedrus atlantica</i>)	Pregnancy
Chamomile (German) (<i>Matricaria recutita</i>)	Interaction with drugs metabolised by CYP2D6 enzyme*
Chamomile (Roman) (<i>Chamaemelum nobile</i>)	Not to be used if allergy to Asteraceae plants exists
Cinnamon (leaf) (<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i>)	Mild dermal irritant; moderate dermal sensitiser; hepatotoxic; drug interaction – may inhibit blood clotting; mucous membrane irritant (low risk) Max 0.5% dilution.
Clary Sage (<i>Salvia sclarea</i>)	Pregnancy
Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>)	None known
Cypress (<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i>)	Sensitiser if oxidised; pregnancy
Eucalyptus citriodora (<i>Eucalyptus citriodora</i>)	May cause dermal sensitisation if used undiluted
Eucalyptus, broad leaf (<i>Eucalyptus dives</i>)	None known
Eucalyptus, blue gum (<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i>)	Can cause CNS and breathing problems in young children – do not apply to or near the face of infants or children under 10 years
Eucalyptus, gully gum (<i>Eucalyptus smithii</i>)	Can cause CNS and breathing problems in young children – do not apply to or near the face of infants or children under 10 years

Fennel (Sweet) (<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>)	Potentially carcinogenic; reproductive hormone modulation; dermal sensitisation if oxidised. Do not use on/during pregnancy; breastfeeding; endometriosis; oestrogen-dependent cancers, children under 5 years Can interfere with anti-diabetic, diuretic and anticoagulant medication.
Frankincense (<i>Boswellia sacra</i>)	Dermal sensitisation if oxidised
Geranium (<i>Pelargonium graveolens</i>)	Dermal sensitisation (low risk). Do not use on dermatitis or sensitive skin
Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)	None known
Grapefruit (<i>Citrus x paradisi</i>)	Expressed – phototoxic (low risk); dermal sensitisation if oxidised
Helichrysum (<i>Helichrysum italicum</i>)	None known (Absolute is a dermal irritant)
Jasmine (Absolute) (<i>Jasminum grandiflorum</i>)	Dermal sensitisation (low risk); pregnancy
Juniperberry (<i>Juniperus communis</i>)	Dermal sensitisation if oxidised; pregnancy
Lavandin (<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i>)	None known
Lavender (<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>)	None known
Lavender (Spike)	May be mildly neurotoxic. Avoid using on/during

<i>(Lavandula latifolia)</i>	fevers, epilepsy, pregnancy
Lemon <i>(Citrus limon)</i>	Expressed – phototoxic (low risk); dermal sensitisation if oxidised. Distilled – dermal sensitisation if oxidised
Lemongrass <i>(Cymbopogon citratus)</i>	Dermal sensitisation (moderate risk); interaction with drugs metabolised by CYP2B6 enzyme*. Avoid using on/during pregnancy; breastfeeding; hypersensitive, diseased, damaged skin; children under 2 years
Lime <i>(Citrus aurantifolia)</i>	Expressed – phototoxic (moderate risk); may be carcinogenic; dermal sensitiser if oxidised Distilled – dermal sensitiser if oxidised
Mandarin <i>(Citrus nobilis)</i>	Dermal sensitisation if oxidised
Marjoram (Sweet) <i>(Origanum majorana)</i>	Pregnancy
May Chang <i>(Litsea cubeba)</i>	Interaction with drugs metabolised by CYP2B6; dermal sensitiser (moderate risk). Do not use on hypersensitive, damaged or diseased skin or on children under 2 years
Melissa <i>(Melissa officinalis)</i>	Dermal irritant; dermal sensitiser (moderate risk). Do not use on hypersensitive, damaged or diseased skin or on children under 2 years
Myrrh <i>(Commiphora myrrha)</i>	May be fetotoxic – avoid using during pregnancy or breastfeeding
Myrtle <i>(Myrtus communis)</i>	Potentially carcinogenic
Neroli <i>(Citrus aurantium var amara flos)</i>	None known

Niaouli ct cineole (<i>Melaleuca viridiflora quinquinervia</i>)	Can cause CNS and breathing problems in young children. Do not apply to or near the face of infants or children
Niaouli ct linalool	None known
Niaouli ct nerolidol	None known
Orange (bitter) (<i>Citrus aurantium var amara per</i>)	Phototoxic (low risk); dermal sensitiser if oxidised
Orange (sweet) (<i>Citrus sinensis</i>)	Dermal sensitiser if oxidised
Petitgrain (<i>Citrus aurantium var amara fol</i>)	None known
Palmarosa (<i>Cymbopogon martini</i>)	Dermal sensitiser (low risk)
Patchouli (<i>Pogostemon cablin</i>)	None known
Peppermint (<i>Mentha piperita</i>)	Mucous membrane irritant (low risk); neurotoxic. Avoid using in cases of cardiac fibrillation, G6PD deficiency**; on or near the face of infants/children; during pregnancy.
Pine (<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>)	Dermal sensitiser if oxidised
Ravensara (<i>Ravensara aromatica</i>)	Potentially carcinogenic

Rose (damask) (<i>Rosa damascene</i>)	Pregnancy
Rose (cabbage) (<i>Rosa centifolia</i>)	Pregnancy
Rosemary ct cineole (<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>)	May be neurotoxic. Do not apply on or near the face of infants/children
Rosemary ct camphor (Rosemary ct verbenone)	May be neurotoxic. Do not use in cases of pregnancy, epilepsy, high blood pressure
Rosewood (<i>Aniba rosaeodora</i>)	None known
Sandalwood (Mysore) (<i>Santalwood album</i>)	Known cause of rare skin reactions
Sandalwood (Caledonian) (<i>Santalwood Austrocaledonicum</i>)	None known
Sandalwood (Australian) (<i>Santalwood spicatum</i>)	None known Recommended max dermal limit 2%.
Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>)	Dermal sensitisation (low risk); mucous membrane irritant (low risk)
Tea Tree (<i>Melaleuca alternifolia</i>)	Dermal sensitisation (low risk) – avoid the use of old/oxidised oil
Thyme ct geraniol (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>)	None known
Thyme ct linalool	None known

Thyme ct thujanol	None known
Thyme ct thymol / Carvacrol	Dermal irritation (low risk); mucous membrane irritation (moderate risk); pregnancy
Vetiver (<i>Vetiveria zizanioides</i>)	None known
Yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>)	Interaction with drugs metabolised by CYP2D6 enzyme*; epilepsy (ct chamazulene). Slightly neurotoxic, however, the chemistry of this oil can vary widely
Ylang ylang (<i>Cananga odorata</i>)	Dermal sensitisation (moderate risk). Skin barrier impairment may increase sensitisation. Do not use on hypersensitive, damaged or diseased skin or on children under 2 years; hypotension.

ESSENTIAL OIL SAFETY FOR SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

NB: Where a specific chemotype is not given, it can be assumed that all chemotypes are applicable

CONDITION /CONTRAINDICATION	CONTRAINDICATED/CAUTIONARY ESSENTIAL OILS
Albinism	Increased risk of skin cancer and photosensitivity – avoid using photosensitising oils
Allergy	Mysore Sandalwood (<i>S. album</i> - cause of rare skin reactions)
Anticoagulant Medication	(see Blood Clotting)
Asteraceae Plant Allergy	Roman Chamomile
Asthma	Avoid direct inhalation of essential oils.

	Maximum dermal dose of 1%
Blood Clotting	(Includes haemophilia, peptic ulcers, internal bleeding, hepatic/renal impairment, hypertensive or diabetic retinopathy, thrombocytopenia (decreased platelet count), vasculitis, breastfeeding, anticoagulant medication, one week before childbirth / surgery) Cinnamon Leaf
Breathing problems	Avoid using oils high in 1,8 cineole and/or menthol. Young children: Cajeput; Eucalyptus globulus/ smithii; Niaouli ct cineole; Peppermint; Rosemary
Breastfeeding (see also Pregnancy and Blood Clotting)	Basil; Cedarwood; Clary Sage; Cypress; Fennel; Jasmine; Juniperberry; Spike Lavender; Lemongrass; Marjoram; Myrrh; Peppermint; Rose damascena / centifolia; Rosemary; Thyme ct thymol / carvacrol
Cancer (see also Oestrogen-dependent Cancers)	Avoid using oils from one week before to one month after a course of chemotherapy / radiotherapy
Carcinogenic	Potentially: Fennel; Lime (expressed); Myrtle; Ravensara Chemicals: asarone, estragole, methyleugenol, Safrole
Cardiac Fibrillation	Avoid all oils with a high menthol content Peppermint
Child Birth	(see Blood Clotting)
Children	Avoid using oils high in 1,8 cineole and/or menthol. Under 2 years: Benzoin; Lemongrass; May Chang; Melissa; Ylang Ylang Under 5 years: Fennel (avoid direct inhalation) Infants/Children: Cajeput, Cardamon; Eucalyptus

	globulus/smithii; Niaouli ct cineole; Peppermint; Rosemary
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)	Avoid direct inhalation of essential oils
CNS Problems	Avoid using oils high in 1,8 cineole and/or menthol. Young children: Cajeput; Eucalyptus globulus/smithii; Niaouli ct cineole
Cytochrome P450 Inducers/Inhibitors	(see Drug Interaction)
Damaged Skin	(see Hypersensitive skin)
Dermatitis	Geranium In cases of atopic dermatitis, avoid using any sensitising oils
Diabetic Retinopathy	(see Blood Clotting)
Diseased Skin	(see Hypersensitive skin)
Drug Interaction	Cinnamon Leaf (see Blood Clotting) CYP2D6 enzyme*: German Chamomile; Yarrow CYP2B6 enzyme*: Lemongrass; May Chang Barbiturates, Benzodiazepines, Anaesthetics: avoid sedating oils, eg lavender, clary sage
Ears	Undiluted essential oils should not be dripped into the ears
Emphysema	(see COPD)
Endometriosis	Avoid oils high in (E)-anethole

	Fennel
Epilepsy	Spike Lavender; Rosemary ct camphor /verbenone; Yarrow ct chamazulene
Eyes	Essential oils should not be used in or near the Eyes
Fetotoxic	Myrrh (possibly)
Fever	(See also Epilepsy) Spike Lavender
G6PD Deficiency**	Peppermint
Glaucoma	No research on this – possible caution when using oils high in 1,8 cineole and/or aldehydes, e.g. Cajeput, Eucalyptus (cineole based), Lemongrass, May, Chang, Melissa, Niaouli, Ravansara
Haemophilia	(see Blood Clotting)
Hepatotoxic	Cinnamon Leaf
Homeopathic Preparations	No clinical evidence to suggest that essential oils react with homeopathic preparations. Perhaps avoid the following based on general belief: Eucalyptus globulus, Peppermint, Rosemary ct camphor, Spearmint
Hormone Modulators	Fennel
Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)	Unlikely that Aromatherapy treatments could adversely affect HRT (Tisserand)
Hypersensitive, Diseased,	Benzoin; Geranium; Lemongrass; May Chang;

Damaged Skin	Melissa; Ylang Ylang
Hypertension	Rosemary
Hypertensive Retinopathy	(See Blood Clotting)
Hyper/Hypothyroidism	(See Hormone Modulators)
Hypotension	Ylang Ylang
Irritant (dermal)	Low Risk: Cajeput; Cinnamon Leaf; Helichrysum (if Absolute); Thyme ct thymol / carvacrol Melissa
Lactation	(see Breastfeeding)
Migraine	Avoid using essential oils during an attack
Mucous Membrane Irritant	Undiluted essential oils should not be applied to mucous membranes, ie eyes, mouth, nasal passages, vagina, rectum Low Risk: Cinnamon Leaf; Eucalyptus citriodora; Lemongrass; May Chang; Melissa; Peppermint; Spearmint Moderate Risk: Thyme ct thymol / carvacrol
Neurotoxic	Spike Lavender (possibly); Peppermint; Rosemary ct cineole / verbenone / camphor (possibly); Yarrow (mild)
Oestrogen-dependent Cancers	Avoid oils high in (E)-anethole Fennel
Oxidised Oils (causing dermal irritation / sensitisation)	Bergamot (expressed and distilled); Cypress; Fennel; Frankincense; Grapefruit; Juniperberry; Lemon; Lime; Mandarin; Bitter Orange; Sweet Orange; Black Pepper; Pine; Tea Tree

Paracetamol	Possible drug interaction, but this may only be the case if essential oils are ingested*. Caution with: Basil ct methyl chavicol (Comoro Islands), Cinnamon bark, Fennel, possibly Peppermint
Peptic Ulcers	(see Blood Clotting)
Photocarcinogenic	Bergamot (expressed) – possibly
Phototoxic	Low Risk: Grapefruit (expressed); Lemon (expressed); Bitter Orange Moderate Risk: Bergamot (expressed); Lime (expressed)
Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)	(See Hormone Modulators)
Pregnancy (see also Breastfeeding)	It is advisable that the therapist receives additional specialist training in this subject prior to treating pregnant clients with essential oils. Basil; Cedarwood; Clary Sage; Cypress; Fennel; Jasmine; Juniperberry; Spike Lavender; Lemongrass; Marjoram; Myrrh; Peppermint; Rose damascena / centifolia; Rosemary; Thyme ct thymol / carvacrol
Sensitisation (dermal)	Low Risk: Basil ct linalool; Benzoin; Geranium; Palmarosa; Spearmint; Tea Tree Moderate Risk: Cinnamon Leaf; Jasmine Absolute; Lemongrass; May Chang; Melissa; Ylang Ylang Eucalyptus citriodora (possibly if used neat on dermis)
Sensitive Skin	(see Hypersensitive skin)
Skin	Asian: Benzyl salicylate in Ylang Ylang; photoallergy to Sandalwood White: More susceptible than ethnically darker skin to irritation, phototoxicity,

	<p>photocarcinogenesis Cancer: Avoid the use of all phototoxic oils</p>
Sunlight/Sunbeds	<p>(see also Phototoxic) Skin should not be exposed to UV light for 12-18 hours following the application of phototoxic essential oils unless maximum dosage levels have not been exceeded</p>
Surgery	<p>(see Blood Clotting) Seek medical/professional advice before application of essential oils</p>
Thrombocytopenia	<p>(see Blood Clotting)</p>
Transdermal Patches	<p>Essential oils should not be applied on or near skin where drug patches are being used and they may increase the bioavailability of the drug</p>
Transplants	<p>Avoid using essential oils on anyone undergoing organ or tissue transplant or who are taking conventional immunosuppressant drugs</p>
Vasculitis	<p>(see Blood Clotting)</p>
Vaginal Douching	<p>Not recommended unless using a preparation made specifically for this purpose</p>

Drug interaction with Cytochrome P450 enzyme via all routes of administration.

CYP2B6 – Lemongrass; May chang

CYP2D6 – German Chamomile; Yarrow

(For list of specific drugs affected by these oils, please refer to 'Essential Oil Safety – 2nd edition' by Tisserand and Young, Appendix B: Examples of Drug Substrates for CYP Enzymes, p.661)

** G6PD deficiency is an inherited enzyme deficiency usually found in people of Chinese, West African, Mediterranean or Middle Eastern origin. People with this

deficiency can have abnormal blood reactions to drugs such as antimalarials, sulphonamides, chloramphenicol, streptomycin and aspirin.

RHIND, J. P. Aromatherapeutic Blending. Singing Dragon. 2016