

Lavender Essential Oil: *Lavandula angustifolia*

Lavender, the most versatile and best-loved of all the essential oils, a first aid kit in a bottle. There are many varieties of lavender but *Lavandula angustifolia* is the most popular, the most therapeutically active and the safest. It is one of the most commonly used essential oils in aromatherapy; producing a pharmacological and psychological effect on our bodies through its calming, soothing, healing and balancing properties. It is absorbed into the body through the skin, the lungs and the nasal chamber. Safe to use, cost effective, easily available, holistic, lavender essential oil is the ideal complementary therapy for self medication and home use.

Application

There are several different ways in which lavender essential oil can be applied:

Application to the skin:

Baths – add up to 5 drops of oil to your fully run bath water.

Neat – 1 or 2 drops can be applied neat to the skin.

Massage – gently massage the body with a blend of 10 - 15 drops of lavender oil and 30ml of sweet almond oil.

Inhalation:

Steam – add a few drops of oil to a bowl of hot water, inhale under a towel.

Neat – add 1 or 2 drops to a handkerchief and place inside your pillow case.

Indirect – place a few drops in a room vaporiser or diffuser.

Uses

Skin conditions

Properties: antiseptic, analgesic, stimulates growth of healthy skin cells, reduces scarring and anti-inflammatory.

Used to assist treatment of: acne, insect bites, minor burns, bruises, sunburn, scarring, stretch marks.

Application: apply neat for minor burns, insect bites and cuts. Apply in massage oil blend to bruises.

Nervous system

Properties: soothing, calming, balancing, relaxing, sedative, analgesic, antidepressant, tonic.

Used to assist treatment of: headaches, insomnia, nervous tension, anxiety, mood swings, stress related disorders, PMS.

Cancer: used palliatively to improve wellbeing and reduce anxiety.

Application: apply 1 or 2 drops neat to the temples or back of the neck for headaches, migraine and insomnia. Use in baths and gentle massage, applied directly to pillow or indirectly in vaporisers and diffusers.

Respiratory system

Properties: expectorant, decongestant, antiseptic, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, sedative.

Used to assist treatment of: bronchial congestion, coughs & colds, influenza, sore throats, croup, laryngitis.

Application: chest rub using massage oil, steam inhalation, applied directly to pillow or indirectly in room diffusers.

Babies & Infants:

Properties: analgesic, antiseptic, sedative, soothing, calming, relaxing

Used to assist treatment of: fretfulness (e.g. with teething problems), insomnia, eczema, nappy rash.

Application: Massage: newborn baby **1 drop**, 2 to 12 months **3 drops** in **30 ml** sweet almond oil. Massage baby's body avoiding eyes, mouth and genitals. Inhalation: **1 or 2 drops** in a room vaporiser/diffuser. Bath: add **1 drop** to bath water.

Pregnancy:

It is recommended that essential oils are only used during pregnancy under the guidance of a qualified aromatherapist.

Adverse Effects: generally regarded as non-irritant and non-sensitising. However over-use of the oil in sensitive individuals could lead to contact dermatitis/contact allergy, especially with the use of neat oil.

Interactions: could potentiate effects of sleeping tablets, sedatives and antidepressants taken concurrently.

References: University of Otago, Canterbury Medical Library, Complementary & Alternative medicine section.

KEEP OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN* *NOT TO BE TAKEN INTERNALLY* *AVOID DURING PREGNANCY