

## **Safe essential oils for pets and children**

Essential oils are natural, but just because they are derived from nature, it doesn't make them any less potent. For that reason, when dealing with pets and children, we have to be careful about the types and amounts of oils we use either when they are around, or on them.

### **Using essential oils around your pets**

Cats and dogs have a stronger sense of smell than we do, so they can find essential oils used in a room diffuser to be quite overwhelming. Cats cannot break the compounds in essential oils down, so a build-up can cause liver toxicity and make your kitty very ill indeed. Pet birds, small mammals and reptiles are very sensitive to essential oils and in some cases they can even be deadly. Use diffusers around pets with caution.

### **Are any essential oils safe for pets?**

The good news is that not all essential oils will harm your pets. Some can be used safely in proximity to your animals, albeit with strict guidelines (see below).

### **Essential oils that are safe for use around cats and dogs:**

- Cedarwood
- Chamomile
- Clary Sage
- Lavender
- Marjoram
- Myrrh
- Rosemary
- Marjoram
- Myrrh

### **Using essential oils around pets – safely**

Always dilute essential oils with a carrier oil if you're using them when pets are around. They should never be ingested by pets, and the [ASPCA](#) says that they should never be applied directly to their fur or skin, either, as '*Dogs and cats who have either walked through oils, gotten some on their coat or had oils placed directly on them can develop health concerns.*'

Using an oil diffuser for a short time period in an area that your dog or cat can't reach should be OK, but if your pet has a history of breathing problems, it may be best to avoid using one altogether.

Cats have been known to have adverse effects around:

- Cinnamon

- Citrus
- Clove
- Eucalyptus
- Pennyroyal
- Peppermint
- Pine
- Sweet Birch
- Wintergreen
- Tea Tree
- Ylang Ylang

The [Pet Poison Helpline](#) also advises that the following oils are toxic to dogs:

- Pine
- Pennyroyal
- Tea Tree
- Wintergreen

### **Using essential oils on children**

You can use diluted essential oils from a very young age in baby massage. Studies show that baby massage is excellent for soothing irritability and promoting development, although the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians does not recommend using essential oils at all on babies younger than three months.

You can still use essential oils on young children, but you have to [treat them a little differently](#) and remember to dilute them down. Some oils are only suitable for use on children over a certain age, and some should be avoided altogether. That said, there are many oils that can be used to soothe and heal kids and it would be a shame to rule out aromatherapy completely. The best ways to safely use aromatherapy on children is a diffuser, massage or in their bedtime bath water.

The National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy (NAHA) recommends diluting the essential oil used for babies and children to just [0.5 to 2.5 percent](#). Here is a list of oils you can use safely with your children:

- Blue Tansy
- Cedarwood
- Cypress
- Geranium Bourbon
- German Chamomile
- Lavender
- Mandarin
- Neroli
- Sandalwood
- Tea Tree

## **Essential oils to avoid using on and around your kids**

Some essential oils are just too strong for small children, whose livers and immune systems aren't quite developed enough yet. Peppermint is one example, as it contains a high amount of menthol, Eucalyptus and Rosemary also have high amounts of a compound called 1,8-Cineole, or eucalyptol, which makes them unsuitable use around children.

### **Oils to avoid using for children at all:**

- Birch (Sweet)
- Chaste Tree

### **Oils to avoid using for children under 10:**

- Benzoin
- Black Seed
- Cassia
- Clove
- Garlic
- Ginger Lily
- Honey Myrtle
- Hyssop
- Lemon Leaf
- Lemon Myrtle
- Lemongrass
- Massoia Bark
- May Chang
- Melissa
- Sweet Verbena
- Oakmoss
- Opopanax
- Oregano
- Peru Balsam
- Saffron
- Sage
- Savory
- Styrax
- Treemoss
- Tuberose
- Turpentine
- Verbena
- Ylang Ylang

The truth is that essential oils can still be a tool to naturally care for children's bodies and minds. Choose the correct and best quality oils and the results will speak for themselves.