

Aromatherapy Support for Colds and Flu

Colds and flu are big business for drug companies in America; between [9.2 and 35.6 million people](#) in the United States get influenza or flu every year and countless more will have a cold or a cough. Despite what the ads say, there is no cure for these viruses, so over the counter medications can only treat the symptoms. Antibiotics simply don't work on viruses, and people are turning to natural remedies like essential oils to treat the effects of the illness.

Which essential oils ease flu symptoms?

The best-known hero oil for flu and any infections of the respiratory tract is Eucalyptus oil, which is thought to help fight or even prevent the flu. [Research](#) has been carried out into the effectiveness of a few well-known essential oils and they've been discovered to have genuine anti-influenza virus properties:

- **Bergamot oil** vapor works against the flu virus after just 10 minutes' exposure. **Eucalyptus oil** also shows anti-viral promise in its vapor form.
- **Red thyme oil** is effective against some flu viruses as a liquid, as is **Cinnamon leaf oil**.
- **Tea tree oil** is effective against the flu virus – it just needs 10 minutes exposure, according to one [study](#). Tea tree oil has antibiotic properties as well, so can also soothe sore throats and break up congestion.
- **Sweet Fennel oil** can help to ease symptoms of bronchitis and flu and is a great oil to pick up if you find over-the-counter pain relievers upset your stomach as it can help settle tummy problems too.

How to use essential oils to fight cold and flu viruses

You can try blending your own essential oils on their own or ask advice from an aromatherapist or an alternative healthcare practitioner if you're not sure about concentrations. Alternatively, there are ready-blended oils available commercially if you want to try those first.

There are two recommended methods for using essential oils against colds and flu:

- **Topical application:** If you choose to apply essential oils to your skin, it's recommended that you mix them with a carrier oil such as sweet almond oil to avoid unpleasant skin reactions. You could massage them directly into your skin or add drops to a bath, with Epsom salts, so that you benefit from inhalation as well as absorption.
- **Inhalation:** Add a few drops of essential oil to a bowl of hot water, cover your head and the bowl with a towel, lean over and inhale the vapor – or add the oils to a room diffuser if you have one.

Don't be tempted to swallow essential oils – it's not recommended and can cause allergic reactions and more. None of the essential oils mentioned should be used for babies and infants or nursing mothers as they can be too potent for young babies.

Remember that all these essential oils, while they can be powerful, will not cure the flu, a cold or cough virus. If your symptoms don't ease, seek medical advice.