



The use of essential oils and massage to help with your Labour

Introduction

This leaflet is designed to give you, your partner and your family an insight into the benefits and safe use of essential oils and massage for your labour and the service that is offered to you in the White Horse Birth Centre.

What are Essential Oils and Massage?

Essential Oils are highly concentrated components derived from plants that have a range of therapeutic properties and may help you during your labour. Massage from your birth partner is great during labour, and its effects can be increased when used with essential oils.

What are the benefits of using essential oils and/or massage in labour?

- To aid relaxation and to reduce fear and tension during labour
- To provide a natural form of pain relief in labour and help with normal birth
- They may help to speed up your labour
- To help ease physical discomfort in labour, such as nausea and headache.

What service is offered to you in labour when you are in hospital?

- An optional service is available. We have all the equipment needed, and some of the midwives in the Birth Centre are trained to advise and administer essential oils to you during labour.
- Your midwife will be happy to discuss this service with you during the antenatal period as part of your preparation for your labour and birth. The service requires your consent.

Can everyone use essential oils and massage in their labour?

Women who have had a normal pregnancy, are in labour and are between 37- 42 weeks gestation can use essential oils; however, there are some medical and pregnancy conditions or labour complications where we advise that essential oils are not used.

Your midwife will be able to advise you personally on whether this service is suitable for you. The service also depends on the availability of trained staff.



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Can I use essential oils if I am having a caesarean?

Yes. Essential Oils can be very calming if used before a caesarean section. Your midwife will be able to advise you.

Can I use Essential Oils and Massage alongside conventional pain relief?

Yes. Your midwife will help to advise you on what will be helpful

Can I bring my own oils to use?

No. We use our own oils from a trusted supply to ensure quality, safety and accuracy in prescribing.

How will the essential oils be used?

There are various ways that the essential oils can be administered:

- In the bath/footbath.
- Via massage – your midwife will be able to show your birthing partner useful massage techniques.
- Via a droplet on the palm of the hand or forehead.
- Via a hot or cold compress using a flannel.
- Via a droplet on a taper or pillow.
- By douche on stitches following delivery.

You will need to bring your own flannels and hand towels to hospital.

What oils are offered? What are their properties?

- **Bergamot:** is an oil with strong antiseptic properties and can help reduce pain in labour and have a calming effect.
- **Clary Sage:** this oil has a sweet, nutty smell and can help reduce pain, fear and tension. It may help speed up your labour.
- **Frankincense:** an excellent oil for calming nervous tension and hyperventilation. It also helps to balance and calm your emotions.
- **Jasmine:** a wonderful oil for reducing anxiety and pain. May also help to speed up your labour.
- **Lavender:** a good all round oil that helps calm, relax and reduce pain and headaches. May also help speed up labour.



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- **Peppermint:** a cooling, refreshing oil, useful for sickness and nausea during labour and can also be used for headaches.
- **Rose:** wonderful in reducing anxiety and enhancing positive feelings.

CAUTION! Do not try to self-administer these oils - they should only be administered by someone trained to do so and may cause serious harm to yourself or your baby if misused.

Any further questions?

If you would like any more information about this service, your community midwife will be happy to discuss it with you.

From 1st January 2019 smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

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