

Using Aromatherapy to Calm Agitated Infants
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Essential oils have been known to treat vast amounts of health related conditions concerning the human body for centuries in all parts of the world. Combining certain essential oils together can lift the spirit or calm a temper. Understanding the oil's property allows one to create blends that work to support a healthy body and mind. The focus in this research paper will be on the benefits to using aromatherapy in treating infants who become agitated and find it hard to calm down and or relax.

Living in a world where people now resort to medication or drugs and alcohol to relieve their unwanted symptoms and disorders has become a custom, however some retailers such as Bath and Body Works have created products such as pillow sprays infused with lavender that help to aid in falling asleep. More and more retailers are beginning to see the benefits in incorporating aromatherapy into their products to address mental, emotional, and physical health problems. Organic products are in high demand from consumers therefore people want solutions to their problems but also want to go about it the healthiest, safest, beneficial, and cost efficient way.

For parents, raising an infant has its ups and downs. Many restless nights are expected but not welcomed and many times the parents find it hard to always know what could be causing their child's discomfort. If certain essential oils are found to have calming properties why do we not think to try them for the agitated baby? Of course making sure it is safe for the child. It is recommended to only topically use essential oils on an infant that is at least three months; otherwise using a diffuser in their room is the best option until they reach three months old (2010, *Calm a New Baby Naturally*). What are the best essential oils to use to calm an upset infant that is safe?

Here are a few:

- Tea Tree
- Chamomile
- Lavender
- Neroli

Tea Tree oil is derived from a large bushy evergreen shrub. It is safe to use during entire pregnancies and for children. Not only does it help in the aid to an infant's mental clarity and stability under stress, but can actively fight a variety of infectious organisms such as bacteria, fungi, and viruses all in helping to keep a baby healthy (2009, *Aroma apothecary clinical aromatherapy level 1*).

Chamomile oil is plant that is a small perennial herb. It is safe to use in a low dilution and in moderation with newborns but three months is still recommended for topical use. Its uses are to calm and soothe the infant. Also helps with impatience, anxiety, insomnia, tension, irritability, and mood swings.

Lavender is a pale green woody shrub with narrow linear leaves and violet-blue flowers. It is safe to use during pregnancy from the third trimester onward and in moderation and low dilution with children. It is used to calm, counters anger, frustrations, insomnia, and helps to create balance on the central nervous system. It is also great for relief of colds, asthma, and whooping cough.

Neroli also known as orange blossom is from the evergreen tree with glossy dark leaves, aromatic white flowers and rich orange fruit. It is nontoxic, nonirritating, and

nonsensitizing. It has a positive effect on the sympathetic nervous system, soothing and aiding restful sleep and also calms anxiety. This essential oil will give a child a feeling of peace (Walters, C. 1998, *Aromatherapy an illustrated guide*).

If the infant is older than three months and you would like to create a topical massage oil blend for them, carrier oils such as Apricot which is great for sensitive or inflamed skin. Sweet almond is also recommended due to its vitamin E content and it is suitable for all skin types. If the infant is not three months or you would prefer not to use aromatherapy topically, using a diffuser is also beneficial. There are several types of diffusers some require water or carrier oils. They work to create a fragrant ambiance that infants can acquire the benefits through inhalation. Most essential oils have antiviral and antibacterial properties; this will help to fight off harmful substances that can cause illness.

When creating an essential oil for an infant to be applied topically, remember to use the essential oils sparingly so you would not need to use the recommended dosage that you would normally use for adults. Here is a blend recommended:

Massage oil blend for a 30ml carrier blend

- Apricot oil (30ml)
- Tea Tree (3 drops)
- Lavender (2 drops)
- Neroli (1 drop)

Apricot oil can be substituted or blended half and half with Sweet Almond oil. Lavender can be substituted for chamomile. The best time to massage the infant with the

essential oil blend is after a bath but avoid just before or after a meal. Take the child to a warm room and lay them on the bed over a blanket. Place them on their back or front; whichever one they are most comfortable with until they become accustomed to massage. Warm about a half teaspoon of the blend in the hands and rub together. If the infant is on their back start the massage at the chest bringing it down to a clockwise motion. Remember to not apply too much pressure. You will end up massaging the entire chest, arms, and legs and then massaging also their back. Massage is also beneficial for babies who suffer from colic or constipation (2010, *Baby smells: how aromatherapy can benefit babies*).

Essential oil blend for a nebulizing diffuser using essential oils

- Tea Tree (5 drops)
- Lavender (4 drops)
- Neroli (3 drop)

Lavender can be substituted for chamomile. More drops are used because it is not being applied topically to the child. Use diffuser as needed but preferably during naps and bed time to help calm and relax.

These are a few ways to help an agitated infant relax using aromatherapy. It is safe and effective for infants but of course each person is different and if for any reason you feel the child is having an adverse effect with the products stop use immediately and possibly seek medical attention if improvement doesn't show after discontinuing. Hopefully you will experience long lasting benefits to this method for calming an agitated child.

References

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Recommended Aromatherapy Book for Children

Aromatherapy for the Healthy Child by Valerie Ann Worwood New World Library (2000) -

Paperback - 320 pages - ISBN 1577310950

View all essential oil precautions at www.learnaroma.com