

Dr. Block is highly sensitive and reactive to all fragrances, including essential oils. If you have any fragrance on your body or clothes, you will be asked to leave The Block Center and you will lose your deposit or you will be responsible for the fee associated with your appointment.

Essential Oils-Side Effects/Dangers/Information from various websites /Mostly those who sell and promote the use of essential oils

If oils are effective, then they have to make actual changes, which means there *could* be negative or even dangerous effects as well.

- If you are using an oil diffuser, make sure you do not use it in rooms of babies or toddlers. It can at times create suffocation or even skin irritation if the child has any allergies.
- Essential oils can also leave a negative side effect when used by people suffering from asthma or respiratory problems. It can at times cause a respiratory reaction.
- Respiratory reactions can also occur if you leave your diffuser plugged in for a longer duration. Just use it for about 30 - 40 minutes and unplug it after use. Never leave the diffuser on overnight.
- Essential oils are highly flammable and hence you need to keep them away from flames for extra safety.
- Intense fragrances can make you feel uncomfortable or you might experience nausea or a headache. So, make sure you use these in a room that has good ventilation.

The vaporized oils can irritate your eyes, nose and throat. These chemicals can, in some patients, trigger asthma attacks. "Also, some people can find the smell of certain oils as an allergy trigger, causing eyesores, sneezes and a runny nose. In those cases, people should avoid those oils entirely."

The oils can also aggravate your skin. Doctors in the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported several cases in which prepubescent boys who used products containing lavender and tea tree oils experienced hormone disruption leading to enlarged breasts. The chemicals had mimicked estrogen, a hormone that increases during puberty in women.

Certain oils, especially those isolated from citrus fruits such as grapefruit, lemon and orange, can make your skin more sensitive to the sun, causing serious burns.

Annie Gonzalez, MD, a dermatologist in Miami, told *The New York Times* that essential oils' reactions are one of the leading causes of allergic contact dermatitis she sees.

Because of their potency, particular oils can pose a risk to small children, infants, and even pets. Also, nursing or pregnant women should seek medical clearance before using essential oils.

There is an interaction between drugs and essential oils, so discuss with your doctor before using essential oils, as they can cause adverse effects. For example, eucalyptus oils and peppermint oil increase the skin absorption of 5-fluorouracil, an anti-cancer drug.

Some pregnant women may choose to avoid certain essential oils, like fennel or peppermint, which are both known to stimulate menstrual flow. Anyone taking prescription or over-the-counter medications should consult a professional before adding essential oil to their regimen.

Thyme, oregano, cinnamon and clove are known to be irritating or hot on the skin. Babies and young children are particularly at an increased risk of skin irritation.

Some oils can trigger uterine contractions and should not be used by pregnant mothers. Using essential oils can cause skin irritation (which entails itching, swelling, rashes/hives) that may take days to heal. Irritation is especially common in those with sensitive skin and in children.

There have been several cases of essential oils getting into a person's eyes and causing severe irritation and temporary or permanent damage to the corneal tissue.

In general, the side effects of essential oils include:

1. Skin sensitivity (rash, reactions, burns, sores, hives)
  2. Photosensitivity (some oils are not ok under sunlight)
  3. Problems for pregnant or nursing women
  4. Medial interactions with certain diseases (especially asthma, liver disease, high blood pressure, diabetes) and medications (some oils can counter the effects of a med you may be taking)
  5. Overuse leading to sensitization/allergies
  6. Nasal Irritation (sneezing, runny nose, congestion)
  7. Eye irritation (redness, irritation, burning)
  8. An anaphylactic reaction to essential oils is rare, but possible
- Inhaling some of the essential oils are not recommended for pregnant women or those who are breastfeeding. This is due to increased sensitivity in pregnant and breastfeeding women.
  - *As per NAHA or The National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy*, some of the essential oils that have to be avoided by pregnant and nursing women are Wintergreen, Sage, Birch, Aniseed, Camphor, Hyssop, Thuja, Wormwood and Parsley essential oils. Women who are nursing should also avoid using peppermint nursing oil as it can drastically decrease the milk supply.

If you are administering any prescription drugs, it is important to know if any of the essential oils you are using will have a medical interaction. If you are unsure, it is better you stop using the same and consult your doctor immediately. A number of essential oils can also cause drug interaction and this can be life-threatening as well.

Dr. Romy Block (no relation), board-certified endocrinologist and co-founder of Vous Vitamin, says essential oils can act as endocrine disruptors, which means they interfere with the natural production of your hormones.

"These chemicals can either lower or raise the normal hormone levels in the body, causing disruption of development, reproductive changes or even interference with the immune system."

Essential oils have been linked to hormone-related health complications. Research has shown lavender oil to be associated with early breast development in girls, for example. Lavender and tea tree oil are also thought to lead to a condition called prepubertal gynecomastia (abnormal breast tissue growth) in boys.

He advises against diffusing lavender and tea tree oils because of the potential complications, particularly in children and teens. Pregnant women and people who have hormone-related medical conditions such as diabetes should talk to their doctors before using essential oils topically or with a diffuser.

I have read and understand the policy on essential oils and fragrances.

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Signature

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Date