

Aromatherapy in Maternity- Full Clinical Guideline Service provided at RDH site only

Reference no.: UHDB/Maternity/01:21/A7

Contents

Section		Page
1	Introduction	1
2	Purpose and Outcomes	1
3	Definitions	1
4	Documentation and Consent	2
5	Methods and Safety	2
5.1	Essential Oil Safety	2
5.2	Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria	3
5.3	Methods of use	3
6	Preparation and storage	5
6.1	Mixing	5
7	In case of a possible adverse reaction	6
8	Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness	6
9	References	6
Appendix A	List of Essential Oils used at RDH	7
Appendix B	Suggested use for specific conditions	14
	Documentation Control	21

1. Introduction

Aromatherapy draws on the healing power of plants with the use of essential oils to enhance physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Aromatherapy is used internationally as complementary therapy for women in labour but also in late pregnancy and the postnatal period. A large study carried out in Oxford showed that women in labour consistently rated aromatherapy as helpful by aiding relaxation and reducing stress and anxiety. This study also showed that pain medication in women using aromatherapy went down.

2. Purpose and Outcomes

To provide a complementary service to our pregnant women and to provide clear guidance to aromatherapy competent staff. To outline the safe usage of essential oils and aromatherapy as well as the benefits and risks. To outline that aromatherapy is not to be used instead of pain relief medication but as an adjunct only to aid relaxation and to reduce stress and anxiety.

3. Definitions

PGD - Patient Group Directions
RDH - Royal Derby Hospital

4. **Documentation and Consent**

The following needs to be documented by the aromatherapy competent midwife in the labour records:

- Confirmation that contra-indications for the selected oils have been checked, including checking for nut allergies where appropriate
- Confirmation that inclusion criteria are met and no exclusion criteria are present
- Documentation of informed verbal consent

The following needs to be documented by the aromatherapy competent midwife on the back of the drugs chart in the PGD/protocol section:

- Oil used
- Method used
- Time started
- Name and signature of administering aromatherapy competent midwife

If the aromatherapy competent midwife provides women with aromatherapy to take home, the woman should be provided with the following written information:

- Oil used
- Method of use
- To be used by the prescribed person only

5. **Methods and Safety**

The oils may be massaged into the skin, added to a bath, inhaled or applied via a compress. If more than one method is used, the total number of different oils used simultaneously should not exceed 3. Essential oils used at RDH for pregnancy and childbirth appear safe especially in the dilution and applications advocated. Occasional mild side-effects may be experienced such as vomiting, nausea, headache and minor skin rash. Thorough agitation of water appears to reduce the likelihood of the latter occurring. Be aware of the possible effect of strong smells on severe asthma.

5.1 **Essential Oil Safety**

Aromatherapy may be offered and administered to women by a midwife who has attended the appropriate study day and has completed the competency training package.

Pregnant members of staff should not make up or massage blends of essential oils but can safely look after women who are using them as they are extremely unlikely to inhale a therapeutic dose of essential oils. Essential oils are added in most perfumes, deodorants, bathing and washing products along with many other things with little apparent detrimental effect. Essential oils evaporate extremely quickly.

No essential oil should be continuously used for approximately more than three weeks.

The aromatherapy competent midwife is expected to:

- discuss the choice of oils (see Appendix A for overview) and methods of use with the woman
- check the contra-indications for the selected oils
- check inclusion and exclusion criteria
- check for allergies

- obtain verbal consent
- prescribe selected oils
- use interpreting services if language difficulties are apparent

A sign must be placed on the door where Aromatherapy is in use. This ensures any person entering the room is aware of the oils being used, in case they themselves fall within the exclusion criteria.

Windows should be opened during the room cleaning process prior to next patient.

5.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria:

- ≥ 36 weeks gestational age including antenatal, latent phase, induction or augmentation of labour, second or third stage labour
- 2nd or 3rd trimester pregnancy loss
- < 36 weeks gestational age once labour is established and inevitable
- Antenatal ≥ 34 weeks as support for anxiety and stress. NOTE: limited only to give frankincense, lemon, mandarin or grapefruit
- Prior to an elective or emergency caesarean section as support for anxiety and stress. NOTE: not intended in any way to support with pain relief
- Postnatal

Exclusion criteria:

- Threatened pre-term labour < 37 weeks gestational age
- Known allergies to essential oils
- Known multiple allergies
- In new complications of labour avoid clary sage, jasmine, rose, basil and nutmeg until a plan is in place, then re-assess essential oil use

5.3 Methods of use

The effect of treatment needs to be observed and only when the essential oil aroma has reduced should another treatment be considered.

There is a positive effect to using an inhalation and massage oil at the same time.

Essential oils are NOT for oral use.

5.3.1 Inhalation

Inhalation can be advised to use for all indications.

To use, add 1 drop of each of the chosen essential oils (maximum of 3) on a gauze swab or cotton pad for nasal inhalation. Store the gauze/pad in a universal pot to retain the therapeutic benefit. Inhalation as and when required on women's own initiative. Alternatively the gauze/pad can be fixed to clothing. However, avoid direct contact with the skin.

5.3.2 Massage

Massage can be advised as a method for:

- aches and pains
- (early) labour pains
- Oedema in legs
- Anxiety and stress

To use, mix a combined total of 3 drops of chosen oil(s) with 15ml of carrier oil in a universal pot. Label the pot stating: patient details, oils contained, time mixed, initials of aromatherapy competent midwife.

Mixture can now be used to massage back, arms, hands, legs, abdomen, feet and/or shoulders as chosen by the woman. Avoid massage over varicosities and/or affected leg if deep vein thrombosis is suspected or confirmed.

5.3.3 Bath

Can be used in combination with inhalation method. NOTE: do not exceed a total of 3 different oils.

Fill the bath and make sure the required temperature is reached. Only then add a combined total of 3 drops of the chosen essential oil(s) to the water. Mix well.

NB only if membranes are intact.

5.3.4 Droplet on palm of hand

To be used only with Frankincense. Apply 1 drop to the palm of the woman's hand and encourage inhalation to ease panic and feelings of loss of control. Useful for any situation of anxiety, especially the transition phase of labour

5.3.5 Compress

Using a compress can be advised as a method for:

- General use by using a face cloth or small towel as a compress on the area needing a compress
- For after pains by using a small towel as a compress applied to the lower abdomen. Cover the compress with a large dry towel to retain the warmth and refresh the compress when needed
- For breast engorgement to reduce pain and aid greater comfort. Use one small towel per breast and cover the breasts under a large towel to retain the warmth. Leave on for up to 30 minutes.
NB: Aromatherapy may be suggested to provide relief of symptoms following a complete feeding assessment to improve positioning and attachment. Increasing feeds or expressing milk also needs to be considered.
- For caesarean section wound to promote healing and prevent infection, to be used once the dressing has been removed. Use soft cloth gauze swabs or a clean face cloth folded in the shape of a sanitary towel as a compress. Apply compress directly to the cs wound and put a small dry towel over the compress for comfort. Leave for up to an hour, remove and expose the wound to the air to dry. Use as often as required. If stinging is experienced, remove the compress and rinse with plain water.
- For headaches to apply to the forehead and/or back of the neck. Can be used in combination with inhalation method. NOTE: do not exceed a total of 3 different oils.

- During labour use a small towel as a compress and place on the lower back when a contraction is nearing its peak. Remove as the contraction wanes and place towel back in water in preparation for the next contraction. Birth partners can be encouraged to take an active part in this
- For perineal wound healing and infection prevention. Use soft cloth, gauze swabs or a clean face cloth folded in the shape of a sanitary towel as a compress. Put a sanitary towel over the compress to catch excess water. Do not use the sanitary towel as a compress on its own. Leave for up to half an hour and repeat when necessary. A warm tingly sensation may be experienced which is normal. If stinging occurs remove the compress and rinse the area with plain water
- For threatened retained placenta a compress can be used aiming to prevent a retained placenta by using a small towel as a compress and place over the fundus and onto the abdomen. Cover with a dry towel if required. It is beneficial to use an inhalation of the chosen essential oils at the same time. NOTE: do not exceed a total of 3 different oils.
- For sore nipples to promote healing, reduce pain and prevent infection use gauze swabs, cotton pads or a small face cloth as a compress. Place over the nipple and leave up to 15 minutes, remove and expose the nipple to the air to dry. A warm tingly sensation may be experienced which is normal. If obvious stinging occurs, remove the compress and rinse with plain water. Rinse nipples with water prior to feeding although this is precautionary as essential oils evaporate very quickly.
NB: Aromatherapy may be suggested to provide relief of symptoms following a complete feeding assessment to improve positioning and attachment. First line treatment should be to express breast milk and apply to the nipples.
- For when unable to pass urine a small towel can be used and applied to the lower abdomen. Cover with a dry towel if required. It is beneficial to use an inhalation of the same chosen essentials oils at the same time

5.3.6 Footbath

A method that can be used at any time >36 weeks gestational age for relaxation and oedema. Use a combined total of up to 3 drops of essential oil in half a bowl of warm water/foot spa and mix well.

5.3.7 Perineal lavage

A method to be used (directly) following suturing to promote healing and help prevent infection. Fill a jug/bowl with warm tap water and add a total of 3 drops of selected essential oil and mix well. Pour slowly over perineum directly following suturing as well as whilst on toilet or bed pan at a later time on the ward or at home. Pat dry and apply sanitary towel.

6. Preparation and storage

Essential oils are stored in designated accessible areas:

- Shared between the birthing centre and labour ward
- Ward 314

Please see appendix C for storing instructions.

6.1 **Mixing**

The oils should be mixed in the designated area where they are stored. Citrus oils must be stored in a fridge and non citrus oils should be stored in a cool, dry place, behind a locked door. Oils can be taken to the woman initially for her to smell before making a choice.

Please follow these steps:

- Always use gloves when blending and mixing essential oils to minimise risk of skin irritation
- At any one time use a maximum combined total of three essential oils. A different three may be used next time
- Avoid undiluted essential oils coming into contact with the skin, especially sensitive areas such as the face, nose, eyes and genitals (with the exception of Frankincense if used intentionally as a single droplet on the palm of the hand)
- Thoroughly wash hands following essential oil administration
- Dispose of unused/unwanted essential oils in the clinical waste bin if blended in a universal pot
- Wash re-usable bowls with warm soapy water, rinse, dry and store in the designated place for storage.

7. **In case of a possible adverse reaction**

If there is a concern that a woman is having an adverse reaction to the essential oil, please:

- Remove the inhalation source and/or compress
- Ask the woman to leave the bath/pool or remove her feet from foot bath
- Where possible, open a window to facilitate evaporation of essential oil
- Wash off massage oil with mild soap and warm water
- Expose skin to air to encourage evaporation of essential oil
- In the unlikely event that severe skin irritation appears, use a cold compress with water only to soothe and refer to a doctor
- Follow RDH Trust anaphylaxis guidelines if indicated

8. **Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness**

As per agreed business unit audit forward programme

9. **References (including any links to NICE Guidance etc.)**

Smith CA, Collins CT, Crowther CA. Aromatherapy for pain management in labour. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2011, Issue 7. Art. No.: CD009215. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD009215

Burns E *et al.* An Investigation into the Use of Aromatherapy in Intrapartum Midwifery Practice *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* **Vol. 6:** 141-7. 2000

Burns, E., Zobbi, V., Panzeri, D., Oskrochi, R. and Regalia, A. (2007), Aromatherapy in childbirth: a pilot randomised controlled trial. *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, 114: 838–844

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust. Guideline for administration of aromatherapy with childbearing women. March 2015

Complementary therapies Factsheet 19. (n.d.). Available at: <https://epilepsysociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-02/ComplementarytherapiesFebruary2023.pdf> [Accessed 4 Jan. 2024].

List of Essential Oils used at RDH

Basil *Ocimum basilicum*

Anti-spasmodic, stimulant, tonic, anti-viral, anti-fungal, strongly bactericidal, diuretic, may lower blood pressure, expectorant, emmenagogue.

It has natural neuro-regulating properties so helps to clear the mind, and to relieve stress, anxiety and depression. Its nervine properties strengthen the adrenal cortex and cerebro-spinal system; it is therefore recommended for epilepsy and migraine. Stimulates milk production. Good for wind pain and heartburn. Helps ease cystitis. Good for use in labour and keeps contractions moving along. Supportive during the transition phase of labour. It may expel a threatened retained placenta. May help to reduce blood pressure. Excellent for helping to prevent infections with studies showing the benefits of strongly inhibiting drug resistant bacteria (Opalchenova et al, 2003) and reduced mutagenesis in bacteria cells (Beric et al, 2008).

Caution:

Avoid:

- adding to the pool/bath (inhale from gauze/cotton pad)
- for 30 minutes following insertion of prostin tablet
- if in threatened pre-term labour
- when a woman is over-contracting
- (suspected) unstable lie
- undiagnosed breech (may use if vaginal birth decided)
- if having a caesarean section
- if hypotensive

Chamomile *Anthemis Nobilis*

Anti-spasmodic, anti-inflammatory, bactericidal, anti-depressant, calming, reduces fever.

Assists maternal capacity to cope with labour/contractions. Excellent for back pain as anti-spasmodic for muscular aches and pain so good for labour massage, in particular occipito-posterior labour. Helpful for nervous tension as is calming to the emotions. May relieve insomnia and nausea. Helps to promote healing and to prevent infection in sore/inflamed perineum/caesarean wounds, sore nipples, skin rashes, pruritus, eczema and cannula site infection.

Caution: None.

Clary Sage *Salvia Sclarea*

Anti-spasmodic, anti-depressant, decongestant, anti-septic, calming, anti-fungal, anti-inflammatory, anti-convulsive, nervine, euphoric, tonic, carminative, uterine tonic, lowers blood pressure.

A profoundly relaxing oil that may reduce anxiety, stress, panic attacks and depression. This relaxation enables the reduction of adrenaline and a consequent increase in oxytocin which promotes natural physiological labour. Useful with women being induced, latent phase of labour, active labour and third stage.

Helps to expel retained placenta. May relieve muscular aches and pains as anti-spasmodic. May help reduce migraine and asthma as it helps to relax arterial and bronchial spasm. May relieve wind and wind pain. Can lower blood pressure so useful with gestational hypertension and pre-eclampsia.

Caution:

Avoid:

- if in threatened pre-term labour
- over-contracting
- unstable lie
- undiagnosed breech (may use if vaginal birth decided)
- having a caesarean section
- adding to the pool/bath (may inhale from gauze/cotton pad).
- for 30 minutes following insertion of proppess
- when woman is hypotensive
- in hormone related cancers.

Eucalyptus *Eucalyptus globulus*

Decongestant, expectorant, mucolytic, analgesic, anti-septic, anti-viral, calming, cooling.

May alleviate symptoms of respiratory infections, i.e., coughs, sinusitis, colds, catarrh, flu, bronchitis, asthma and hay fever. Reduces muscular aches and pains so good for labour massage. May also reduce maternal pyrexia (cooling action). Reduces haemorrhage. Useful in cases of athlete's foot, herpes, chicken pox, thrush and cystitis. Refreshing and uplifting.

Caution:

Avoid:

- adding to pool/bath (inhale from gauze/cotton pad)
- when using homeopathic remedies (may act as an anti-dote to homeopathy).
- If known epileptic (may induce seizures)

Frankincense *Boswellia carteri*

Anti-inflammatory, anti-septic, analgesic, anti-spasmodic, bactericidal, astringent, anti-oxidant, cell regenerator, mucolytic, expectorant, calming and relaxing.

Frankincense 'calms and stills the mind' to enable focus. May calm hysteria, anxiety, asthma, nervous tension and hyperventilation by slowing the breathing pace. Recommended in situations of maternal panic as reduces agitated thoughts i.e. 'can't get thoughts out of head'. Good for keeping zoned and focussed during labour and any situation involving stress, fear and uncertainty. Useful with induction of labour, active labour, transition, prior to instrumental birth, or caesarean section, postnatally when stressed, e.g. when baby on the special care unit. Also promotes healing and prevents infection in perineum, section wounds & sore nipples. Helpful in calming women with epilepsy.

Caution: None.

Geranium *Pelargonium graveolens*

Analgesic, anti-spasmodic, anti-inflammatory, anti-septic, astringent, anti-fungal, anti-oxidant, balancing, cicatrisant, cell regenerator, regulates hormone function, bactericidal, decongestant, tonic, haemostatic and diuretic, anti-depressant.

Excellent all round balancer, aids circulation by eliminating congestion and waste as stimulates diuresis which is especially useful following birth, when there is difficulty in passing urine. Geranium may help to stop haemorrhage. Particularly excellent as a compress for protruding haemorrhoids during second stage when women find it too painful to push. Helpful for breast engorgement, fluid retention (for example leg oedema), haemorrhoids, anxiety, stress and nervous fatigue. Aids wound healing and skin conditions such as dermatitis and eczema, helps to prevent and reduce scarring. Geranium may be used when women are receiving thromboprophylaxis, e.g. post caesarean section.

Caution:

Avoid

- in women who are therapeutically anti-coagulated
- in women with hormone related cancers.

Grapefruit *Citrus paradisi*

Calming, refreshing, uplifting, energising, air antiseptic, anti-viral, germicide, diuretic.

Aches and pains, headaches, anxiety, stress, exhaustion, depression, coughs, colds and flu, oedema, detoxification, acne, aids digestion.

Useful in latent phase, active labour and postnatally to calm refresh, uplift and energise. Reduces adrenaline; which facilitates oxytocin increase & hence natural physiological labour. Reduces Aches and pains; Coughs, colds, flu symptoms and headaches as air anti-septic.

Helps reduce oedema (for example oedematous legs) as facilitates passage of urine (mild diuretic), helps the diuresis process following birth, especially useful when can't pass urine; use with Lemon, Chamomile, Cypress or Geranium.

Caution:

Avoid

- adding to pool/bath (inhale from gauze/cotton pad).

Jasmine *Jasminium officinale/grandiflorum*

Anti-depressant, uplifting, calming, anti-inflammatory, anti-septic, anti-spasmodic, uterine tonic.

May enhance maternal well-being, confidence and optimism. Has an energising effect on the emotions. Enables the reduction of adrenaline and a consequent increase in oxytocin which promotes natural physiological labour. Useful with women being induced, latent phase of labour, active labour and third stage. Massaging the abdomen/lower back may strengthen contractions and provide some pain relief as is relaxing. In a situation of retained placenta, it may be used to aid separation when used with a compress and/or inhalation whilst referring to obstetricians also. May stimulate milk production in breastfeeding women. Calms coughs, regulates and deepens breathing, relieves bronchial spasms.

Caution:

Avoid

- adding to the pool/bath (inhale from gauze/cotton pad)
- for 30 minutes following insertion of propess
- if in threatened pre-term labour
- when a woman is over-contracting
- unstable lie
- undiagnosed breech (may use if vaginal birth decided)
- if having a caesarean section.

Lavender *Lavendula angustifolia*

Relaxing, balancing, calming, cheering, analgesic, anti-spasmodic, anti-inflammatory, anti-viral, anti-fungal, anti-septic, bactericidal, regulates nervous system.

Highly versatile oil. Aids maternal coping capacity for labour/contractions by facilitating relaxation. May reduce muscular aches and pains, stress, insomnia headache and/or migraine. May prevent infection and aid the healing of wounds: recommended for perineal compress during second stage, perineal wounds, caesarean section wounds and cannula site wounds. May help to expel retained placenta. Excellent for asthma with a recent study demonstrating that lavender inhalation; reduces airway resistance, leads to fewer eosinophil cells (specialised white blood cells of the immune system), less mucus in the lungs and

lower Interleukin cytokine levels in the fluids of the lungs, which means immune systems are less stressed after breathing lavender oil. The researchers concluded that lavender may be useful as an alternative medicine for bronchial asthma (Ueno-Iio et al 2014). Can lower blood pressure so useful with gestational hypertension and pre-eclampsia.

Caution:

Avoid

- during haemorrhage
- if hypotensive
- if taking St John's Wort.

Lemon Citrus limon

Refreshing, energising, calming, anti-spasmodic, immune-stimulant, anti-septic, anti-viral, bactericidal, decongestant, anti-fungal, diuretic, skin tonic, lowers blood pressure.

May enhance maternal well-being by uplifting emotions. Good for respiratory infections/symptoms such as asthma, throat infections, bronchitis, catarrh, colds and flu as stimulates the immune system (white cell production). May reduce hypertension. May relieve insomnia and headaches. Stimulates red cell production so useful for anaemia. Can lower blood pressure so useful with gestational hypertension and pre-eclampsia.

Caution:

Avoid:

- during haemorrhage
- if hypotensive
- exposure to strong sunlight/ultra-violet light for 2 hours following massage
- adding to the pool/bath (inhale from gauze).

Mandarin Citrus reticulata

Sedating, relaxing, calming, anti-spasmodic, anti-septic, anti-viral, tonic, digestive stimulant, re-vitalising, cell re-generator.

Similar to lemon in enhancing maternal well-being. May reduce nervous tension maternal restlessness, anxiety, agitation and insomnia. Good for keeping zoned and calm throughout all stages of labour as facilitates oxytocin and endorphin production; being induced, in latent phase, active phase and in the postnatal period. Alleviates anxiety in women awaiting caesarean section (use with Frankincense). Good for wind pain; warm abdominal compress.

Caution:

Avoid

- adding to the pool/bath (inhale from gauze/cotton pad).

Nutmeg Myristica fragrans

Anti-spasmodic, analgesic, bactericidal, anti-septic, emmenagogue, tonic.

Invigorating, uplifting, assists women in getting into their 'zone' during labour. Can aid birth by strengthening contractions. Excellent for relieving muscular aches and pains so a good choice for labour. Good for easing digestive complaints, coughs and colds. Excellent for confidence and optimism.

Caution:

Avoid

- adding to the pool/bath (inhale from gauze)
- for 30 minutes following insertion of propess
- if in threatened pre-term labour
- when a woman is over-contracting
- unstable lie
- undiagnosed breech (may use if vaginal birth decided)
- if having a caesarean section.

Peppermint Mentha piperita/arvensis.

Anti-emetic action, local anaesthetic affect, analgesic, strongly anti-inflammatory, anti-septic, anti-viral, anti-spasmodic, anti-fungal, bactericidal, calming, cooling, can reduce fever, expectorant, mucolytic. A scent which can refresh flagging energy, so good for 'emotional rescue'.

May assist in reducing physiological nausea, vomiting, stress and panic during labour. May be used to reduce maternal pyrexia, headache and migraine. Reduces muscular aches and pains so good to use for massage/compress in labour; particularly occipito-posterior labour. Helps to relieve colds/coughs/flu symptoms; helps to prevent infection and stimulates the immune system. Helps reduce engorged breasts.

Caution:

Avoid

- adding to the pool/bath (inhale from gauze/cotton pad)
- if homeopathic remedies are being used (may act as an antidote to homeopathy).

Rose Rosa centifolia

Anti-depressant, balancing, calming, cheering, tonic, anti-spasmodic, anti-septic, anti-inflammatory, bactericidal, decongestant, emmenagogue, diuretic.

Especially useful following difficult and stressful experiences. For comforting, nurturing, and hormonal balancing; supports women suffering with depression and stress/anxiety both antenatally and postnatally. Valuable for previous poor obstetric history as promotes feelings

of well-being and confidence. Enables the reduction of adrenaline and a consequent increase in oxytocin which promotes natural physiological labour. Useful with women being induced, latent phase of labour, active labour and third stage. Good for eczema, dry and sensitive skin.

Caution:

Avoid

- adding to the pool/bath (inhale from gauze/cotton pad)
- for 30 minutes following insertion of propess
- if in threatened pre-term labour
- when a woman is over-contracting
- unstable lie
- undiagnosed breech (may use if vaginal birth decided)
- if having a caesarean section.

Ylang ylang Cananga odorata

Anti-spasmodic, balancing, calming, sedative, tonic, anti-septic, lowers blood pressure.

Excellent for anxiety, depression, fear and panic. Calms the breathing. Reduces adrenaline which facilitates a consequent increase in oxytocin which promotes natural physiological labour. Can lower blood pressure so useful with gestational hypertension and pre-eclampsia.

Caution:

Avoid

- adding to pool/bath (inhale from gauze/cotton pad)
- if hypotensive
- with headache.

Base/carrier oil

Carrier oils aid absorption of essential oils into the bloodstream through the skin. They help to lubricate the skin for massage. In order to avoid possibility of nut allergy, Grape seed oil is recommended to be used as a carrier for essential oils for massage. Grape seed oil is a gentle emollient containing linoleic acid, protein and vitamin E. It is light, non-sticky and suitable for all skin types. Carrier oils may be used alone for massage when the use of aromatherapy essential oils is contra-indicated.

When additional essential oils are added to the stock for use, all available information, research and detailed chemical properties together with their use will be identified and communicated to all who will be using them. There will be a short period of limited use in the clinical area together with an audit in order to evaluate effectiveness and to identify any possible concerns. If all appears to be well, the essential oil will then be added to the stock.

**INHALATION – FOR RELAXATION, REDUCING STRESS/ANXIETY, PAIN
RELIEF**

EQUIPMENT: Gloves, Gauze swab, chosen essential oils, tape and if needed for take away purposes MSU pot.

METHOD:

- Add 1 drop of each of your chosen essential oils (maximum TOTAL of 3 drops in any chosen combination) onto a gauze and rub the gauze together to encourage blending of oils.
- The gauze can be taped to the woman's clothing (must not be in direct contact with skin as this can cause irritation) or can be placed in an MSU pot for future use. (Note the gauze should only be kept for 24hours due to oxidation. It is essential that the pot is labelled with patient identifiers and list of essential oils used).

**THOUGHT TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE IF USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
MASSAGE OILS AT THE SAME TIME.**

MASSAGE FOR EARLY/ACTIVE LABOUR AND GENERAL ACHES AND PAINS

EQUIPMENT: MSU pot, gloves, Grape seed carrier oil and chosen essential oils.

OILS YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER:

Any blend the woman wishes, a good combination you may wish to explore includes Clary Sage, Frankincense and Peppermint.

METHOD:

- A low dilution of 1% is recommended as this allows you to offer inhalation at the same time. Therefore 1 drop of essential oil per 5mls of carrier oil, making a total of 3 drops in 15mls of carrier oil.
- Label pot with patient identifiers, carrier oil and essential oils.

**THOUGHT TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE IF USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
INHALATION**

COMPRESS FOR USE IN LABOUR

EQUIPMENT: Wash Bowl, gloves, small towel and essential oils.

OILS YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER:

Lavender, Chamomile, Clary Sage, Eucalyptus, Peppermint, Frankincense, Nutmeg or Basil are a combination of analgesic, anti-spasmodic and calming.

METHOD:

- Half fill wash bowl with warm water.
- Add chosen oils (Maximum 3 drops in TOTAL, for example if choosing 3 different oils, you will only need 1 drop of each oil).
- Mix water well to disperse oils evenly (wear gloves when doing this).
- Immerse towel in water and squeeze out excess water.
- Apply to woman's back after contraction has commenced but prior to the peak of the contraction.
- Remove towel and immerse back in water as contraction wanes.
- Empower birth partner to continue technique and encourage ongoing support.

THOUGHT TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE IF USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH INHALATION

RETAINED PLACENTA

Ideally commence aromatherapy BEFORE the placenta is officially retained (regardless if active or physiological management). If this is not possible use as soon as diagnosis is made if clinical situation allows).

EQUIPMENT: Gloves, wash bowl, small towel, large towel, gauze and essential oils.

OILS YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER:

Clary Sage, Jasmine, Nutmeg, Basil.

METHOD:

- Add 3 drops of your chosen essential oil (maximum TOTAL of 3 drops of choosing a combination) onto a gauze and rub the gauze together to encourage blending of oils. Encourage the woman to inhale (do this whilst making up the compress).
- Half fill wash bowl with warm water.
- Add chosen oils (Maximum 3 drops in TOTAL). Mix water well to disperse oils evenly (wear gloves when doing this).
- Immerse small towel into water and squeeze out excess water.
- Apply to uterine fundus and cover with a dry towel.
- Encourage inhalation from gauze swab in conjunction with compress.

AFTER PAINS

EQUIPMENT: Gloves, wash bowl, small towel, large towel and essential oils.

OILS YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER: (Aiming for a combination of analgesic, anti-spasmodic, relaxing and calming).

Lavender, Chamomile, Mandarin, Eucalyptus, Clary Sage, Frankincense, Peppermint, Nutmeg, Basil or Geranium.

METHOD:

- Half fill wash bowl with hot water (be careful not to burn).
- Add chosen oils (Maximum 3 drops in TOTAL). Mix water well to disperse oils evenly (wear gloves when doing this).
- Immerse small towel into water and squeeze out excess water.
- Apply to lower abdomen and cover with a larger dry towel.
- Repeat as towel starts to cool and continue for one treatment of **half an hour**.

PERINEAL COMPRESS

Ideal to relieve sore, painful perineum and for haemorrhoids, also helps promote healing and prevent infection.

EQUIPMENT: Gloves, wash bowl, face cloth, sanitary towel and essential oils.

OILS YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER:

Lavender, Chamomile, or Geranium.

METHOD:

- Half fill wash bowl with very cold water.
- Add chosen oils (Maximum 3 drops in TOTAL). Mix water well to disperse oils evenly (wear gloves when doing this).
- Immerse face cloth into water and squeeze out excess water, fold cloth into sanitary towel shape.
- Apply directly to tear/ sutures/ haemorrhoids and place dry sanitary towel behind compress, leave for up to **half an hour**.
- Remove compress, dry and replace with a dry sanitary towel.
- The solution can be kept in fridge to be used another 2 times during the same day. Prior to each use agitate water to ensure mixing of oils.

Note: initially a warm tingly sensation may be experienced which is normal. If obvious stinging occurs remove compress and rinse with water.

LSCS WOUND CARE

Ideal to promote healing, improve comfort and prevent infection.

EQUIPMENT: Gloves, wash bowl, face cloth, small towel and essential oils.

OILS YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER: Lavender and Chamomile, Frankincense and Geranium.

METHOD:

- Half fill wash bowl with warm water (be careful not to burn).

- Add chosen oils (Maximum 3 drops in TOTAL). Mix water well to disperse oils evenly (wear gloves when doing this).
- Mix the water well (wear gloves when doing this).
- Fold the face cloth into a sanitary towel shape and immerse into the solution, gently squeeze out excess solution.
- Lay directly over wound, place the small towel over the top.
- Leave for up to **half an hour** then remove and expose to air until completely dry.
- Compress may be used 2-3 times daily. Leaving a minimum of three hours between treatments.

Note: initially a warm tingly sensation may be experienced which is normal. If obvious stinging occurs remove compress and rinse with water.

AFTER PAINS

EQUIPMENT: Gloves, wash bowl, small towel, large towel and essential oils.

OILS YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER: (Aiming for a combination of analgesic, anti-spasmodic, relaxing and calming).

Lavender, Chamomile, Mandarin, Eucalyptus, Clary Sage, Frankincense, Peppermint, Nutmeg, Basil or Geranium.

METHOD:

- Half fill wash bowl with hot water (be careful not to burn).
- Add chosen oils (Maximum 3 drops in TOTAL). Mix water well to disperse oils evenly (wear gloves when doing this).
- Immerse small towel into water and squeeze out excess water.
- Apply to lower abdomen and cover with a larger dry towel.
- Repeat as towel starts to cool and continue for one treatment of half an hour.

BREAST ENGORGEMENT

Aromatherapy can help reduce breast congestion leading to greater comfort and reduced pain.

EQUIPMENT: Gloves, wash bowl, 2 x small towels, 1 x large towel and essential oils.

OILS YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER: Lavender, Chamomile, Frankincense, Peppermint, Geranium (may use geranium with anti-coagulant prophylaxis, avoid if anti-coagulant therapeutic).

METHOD:

- Half fill wash bowl with hot water (be careful not to burn).
- Add chosen oils (Maximum 3 drops in TOTAL). Mix water well to disperse oils evenly (wear gloves when doing this).
- Immerse the 2 small towels in the solution, squeeze out excess water and apply directly around engorged breast, cover completely with larger dry towel. Repeat once the towel starts to cool.
- Continue repetitions as needed over next hour.
- Use 2-3 times daily as required.

SORE NIPPLES

Aromatherapy promotes healing, reduces pain and helps prevent infection.

EQUIPMENT: Gloves, wash bowl, flannel, and essential oils.

OILS YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER: Lavender, Chamomile, Frankincense, Peppermint, Geranium (may use geranium with anti-coagulant prophylaxis, avoid if anti-coagulant therapeutic).

METHOD:

- Half fill wash bowl with warm water (be careful not to burn).
- Add chosen oils (Maximum 3 drops in TOTAL). Mix water well to disperse oils evenly (wear gloves when doing this).
- Immerse the flannel in the solution, fold into a smaller square, squeeze out excess water and apply directly to the nipple area. Cover completely with a larger dry towel.
- Leave for up to 15 minutes.

- Remove and expose nipple to air dry.

Note: initially a warm tingly sensation may be experienced which is normal. If obvious stinging occurs remove compress and rinse with water.

BATH (IF MEMBRANES INTACT)

To be used for pain relief, healing and relaxation, in the antenatal, latent phase, active labour, perineal care and postnatal care.

EQUIPMENT: Gloves and essential oils.

OILS YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER: Lavender, Chamomile and Geranium.

METHOD:

- Fill bath to required temperature and depth.
- Add chosen oils (Maximum 3 drops in TOTAL). Mix water well to disperse oils evenly (wear gloves when doing this).

CAN BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH INHALATION, HOWEVER DO NOT PUT THE GAUZE SWAB DIRECT ONTO SKIN.

Essential oil shelf life

Faye: telephone 07921 525637 or email: faye@amournatural.co.uk
Office: telephone 01458 898030



1 - 2 Years

Grapefruit - *Citrus paradisi*
Lemon - *Citrus limon*
Lime - *Citrus aurantifolia*
Mandarin - *Citrus reticulata*
Orange - *Citrus sinensis*



2 - 3 Years

Bergamot FCF - *Citrus bergamia*
Black Pepper - *Piper nigrum*
Roman Chamomile - *Chamaemelum nobile*
Cypress - *Cupressus sempervirens*
Frankincense - *Boswellia carterii*
Juniper Berry - *Juniperus communis*
Lemongrass - *Cymbopogon citratus*
Lemon Myrtle - *Backhousia citriodora*
May Chang - *Litsea cubeba*
Neroli - *Citrus aurantium var amara*
Pine - *Pinus sylvestris*
Rosemary - *Rosmarinus aromatica*
Tea Tree - *Melaleuca alternifolia*



3 - 4 Years

Basil - *Ocimum basilicum*
Citronella - *Cymbopogon nardus*
Clary Sage - *Salvia sclarea*
Eucalyptus, globulus - *Eucalyptus globules*
Jasmine - *Jasminum sambac*
Lavender - *Lavandula angustifolia*
Myrrh - *Commiphora myrrha*
Petitgrain - *Citrus aurantium*



3 - 4 Years - cont

Thyme - *Thymus vulgaris*
Oregano - *Origanum vulgare*



4 - 5 Years

Cedarwood - *Cedrus atlantica*
Cinnamon - *Cinnamon zeylanicum*
Clove Bud - *Eugenia caryophyllata*
Geranium - *Pelargonium graveolens*
Marjoram - *Origanum majorana*
Rose Geranium - *Pelargonium graveolens*
Palmarosa - *Cymbopogon martinii*
Peppermint - *Mentha arvensis*
Peppermint - *Mentha piperta*
Rose (Absolute) - *Rosa damascena*
Sage - *Salvia officinalis*
Ylang Ylang - *Cananga odorata*



6 - 8 Years

Ginger - *Zingiber officinale*
Patcholui - *Pogostemon*
Sandalwood - *Santalum spicatum*

Documentation Control

Reference Number: UHDB/Maternity/01:21/A7	Version: UHDB 1 Status: FINAL			
	Service provided at RDH only			
Version / Amendment	Version	Date	Author	Reason
	1	Jan 2009	Midwife Anne Bramley Miss R Hamilton	Implementation of new service provision
	2	Dec 2014	Anne Bramley - Midwife	Review
	3	June 2017	Kristen Goodall – Practice Development Midwife Cindy Meijer – Risk Support Midwife Sarah Smith - Midwife	Review
UHDB	1	Oct 2020	Ria Licence - Midwife	Review / merge
Intended Recipients: All staff with responsibility for screening women antenatally				
Training and Dissemination: Training session led by aromatherapy trained midwife +/- handover sessions MWs to complete scope packages / Cascaded through senior midwives/doctors / Published on Intranet; NHS email circulation. / Article in Business Unit newsletter				
To be read in conjunction with: All other maternity guidelines applicable				
Business Unit sign off:	13/01/2021 Maternity Guidelines Group: Miss S Rajendran – Chair 14/01/2021: Maternity Development & Governance Committee/ACD- Miss S Raouf			
Divisional sign off: 19/01/2021 18/01/2024 - Agreed by Miss A Joshi - Chair Maternity Guidelines Group, Mr R Deveraj - Chair Maternity Governance, Dan Littler - Deputy Divisional Director, Sarah Evans - Head of Midwifery to extend review date to April 2024				
Implementation date:	02/02/2021			
Review Date:	January 2024, Extended to April 2024			
Key Contact:	Joanna Harrison-Engwell			