

## I'm Pregnant. Can I use essential oils?

By Penny Keay

You just found out you are pregnant (or your daughter or daughter-in-law is) and you are wondering if you can continue to use essential oils.

We are posed this question several times a month and thought it was a good time to give everyone an answer.

Now there are several things to consider and think about when you are going to become pregnant or are pregnant. One of the first things we are all told is to avoid 'drugs', alcohol, smoking and other chemical compounds. This warning has been around for decades and is especially important during the first trimester of your pregnancy.

The information in this article will hopefully put your mind at ease and realize that although you don't want to go over board on using essential oils when pregnant, you can use them in moderation and sensibly during the entire pregnancy.

If however you are uncomfortable using anything during the first trimester by all means eliminate their use during this time too. Although there are a couple that may well help you with morning sickness and nausea (Ginger and Peppermint). Ultimately you are responsible for the welfare of you and your baby.

Realize that essential oils come from plants that are often times used in cooking, flavoring and scenting. So everyday of your life and including during your pregnancy you will be exposed to essential oils on a daily basis.

What? Yes essential oils are used in your toothpaste and other toiletries, your foods like pizza and spaghetti sauces, herbal chicken seasoning etc. And you are not going to stop brushing your teeth or rinsing your mouth. You won't stop eating your pizza or that rosemary chicken now are you? I would hope not. And all those beautiful flowers - are you going to stop smelling those roses?

Anyway. The point is you are exposed to essential oils throughout your pregnancy and in small amounts they will pose no problems. In fact they can make your pregnancy more comfortable and enjoyable.

Now the safest essential oils are going to be the most common ones that are also used in food and flavorings. But you can still use other essential oils too. You just need to use them in moderation. Which, by the way, is how you are supposed to be using them anyway. Remember in massage or lotions you should be using no more than 1-3% (up to 5% on rare occasions). As for diffusing them you should be able to diffuse in moderation throughout the whole time. Again, use common sense. If they are irritating or causing you to get a headache or nausea - you have diffused too much. Air out the house and take a walk in the fresh air. Diffuse a whole lot less next time.

When you are pregnant all your internal chemistry is changing throughout the entire 9 months and again for several months afterwards. When this chemistry is changing it can cause you to react differently to the essential oils you are exposed to. So one essential oil that you just hated all of sudden you crave or vice versa. Your favorite essential oils now are upsetting to you or you just can't stand them.

The biggest concern with the use of essential oils is as your pregnancy progresses and you get closer to your due date your skin especially may become overly sensitive to various products. This is the time when you may actually need to cut back on the use of essential oils especially ones that you are adding to lotions, shampoos, massage oils etc. If you develop a rash or itchy area discontinue using that blend or essential oil in your lotion and creams.

So as a rule if the essential oil you are using is a typical flavoring herb used in cooking you should be safe. If you are unsure - just avoid it. So use common sense and remember that oils that are not safe to use when you are not pregnant are the ones that are not safe when you are pregnant.

You can find more specifics helps for use during pregnancy in our past newsletter found at <http://birchhillhappenings.com/v882006.htm>

So enjoy - those precious, commonly used essential oils are okay in moderation when you are pregnant!

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