

Help for Head and Chest Congestion – the Steam (Bowl) Bath!

So here it is a couple weeks since everyone was together at the Holidays. And low and behold you still caught everyone's viruses even though you use essential oils and synergy blends on a regular basis. Bummer!

But I bet your ailments aren't nearly as bad as those folks that don't use those powerful essential oils.

Okay, so you have some head congestion and have been coughing at night so you can't get any rest.

You have tried [diffusing essential oils](#) into the room and are even using a [nasal inhaler](#) but this cold/flu/virus is being stubborn and the usual regimen just don't seem to be working. What are you going to try next?

When the normal use of essential oils don't seem to bring results you will have to 'step' things up a notch. This is simple to do, but does take a little more time.

First you will start by getting a large bowl, pan or kettle that you can add about 4-6 cups of hot water into without the container being more than half full. You want plenty of space between the top of the hot water and the top edge of the container.

Besides the bowl, you will need a timer, a large bath towel and finally you'll want some essential oils or blends. Our suggestion is to use [Eucalyptus](#), [Peppermint](#) and [Ravintsara](#). Or for a blend our [Easy Breathe or Respiratory blends](#). You may need to experiment a little but you'll figure out quickly what works best for you.

You do not need boiling water for this!!! You can use the hottest tap water that comes from your faucet or as we did, we made a pot of plain hot water through our Bunn Coffee maker. Of course if the hot water from the tap is only 'luke' warm (less than 120 degrees) then you might want to heat it on the stove top but again – DO NOT USE BOILING water!!!

Boiling hot water is unnecessary for Steam bowl applications and can cause more harm than good. So just heat the water to hot but not boiling. If you see water vapor 'curling' up above the pot it is ready. The water is not even near boiling at this point but is plenty hot.

Ideally water about 150 degrees will provide you with plenty of warm moist vapors and excite the essential oils to be able to be inhaled at a higher rate than using the nasal inhaler or diffuser.

Set your timer for about 8-10 minutes. Add the hot water to the bowl and then put in 2 drops of each of the essential oils you have decided to use. Normally you won't need more than a total of 6-8 drops of any of the oils or blends. These will be plenty strong.

Drape the towel over your head and over the bowl and don't forget to turn on the timer. You don't need to 'steam' for more than 8-10 minutes at each session. In fact some folks don't even need to 'steam' for more than 5 minutes per session.

If you feel your air passages open and then after 5 minutes you feel them start to close – time is up! You don't need to continue. In fact at this point the steaming won't help any further. So stop and re-steam as needed a couple hours later.

Almost immediately you will feel the [peppermint](#) and [eucalyptus](#) opening up your head sinuses and nasal passageways. And your throat will feel the soothing warmth and moisture from the hot water to help relieve that nagging tickle that makes you cough.

Keep your eyes closed while you use the steam bath. Breathe through your nose for a few breathes and also open your mouth and breathe through your mouth. The essential oils can penetrate your mucous membranes in your mouth and throat and give you comfort here too.

You may repeat this steam bath as needed – usually every 3-4 hours until you feel better. Usually after about the third 'steaming' you will see noticeable improvement. But continue for several more steams as the essential oils will continue to get those nasty viruses under control.

This 'Steaming' is not intended for use by children under 4 years of age. They may not know enough to keep their eyes closed. Also anyone under 16 years should have adult supervision and still need to be monitored during use.

You may have figured it out that both Al and I caught a couple different viruses this past Christmas. Hey, we had to hug and kiss all our nephew & nieces, sisters and all those little kids!

And even though we are exposed to essential oils on a daily basis we can still encounter a new strain of 'germs' that can get their grip on us. We used the above Steam bowl method when our normal regimen of diffusing [Four Robbers and Pure Cleansing](#). We still kept diffusing these during the whole time, but they didn't seem to help give us relief for the head congestion or cough. But when we started the Steaming bowl of [Eucalyptus](#) and [Peppermint](#) along with [Ravintsara](#) they did the trick and within just a few 'steamings' we were back on the road to recovery.

Just remember that although you use essential oils daily, you can still catch viruses and other germs. But your immune system is stronger and most of the time you won't be down and out for very long. For us, we felt under the weather for only a couple days, the cough was worse at night but steaming prior to bed time enabled us to sleep almost all through the night after the first day. We recovered within 3-4 days! Others in our area have been down and out for over 7-10 days!

If you do get sick, we hope you feel better soon!

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Aromatherapy Tip of the Week

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