

Asthma Symptom Reduction Using Essential Oils

Dr. Crystal Sciarini, ND

Essential oils are secondary plant metabolites that are extracted from plants through special processes, such as steam distillation. The essential oil of a plant has a different chemical composition from the herb of the same plant. It is necessary to understand the chemical composition to understand how to safely use each essential oil. Some essential oils are calming, while other essential oils are stimulating. Applying the wrong type of oil can be detrimental when treating asthma.

First, let's talk about when to use essential oils for asthma. An essential oil should never be used to treat an asthma attack or if you are experiencing an acute increase in symptoms. Essential oils may be used in between asthma attacks to help prevent and reduce the severity of symptoms. It is also important to note that asthma sufferers who know they are sensitive to odors should not use essential oils without consulting their holistic healthcare professional first.

When using essential oils for asthma the oil should be applied using a carrier oil to the chest or by inhalation using a nebulizer or steam bath. Essential oils should not be diffused for the purpose of treating asthma. Diffusion makes it unlikely to achieve a therapeutic dose of the oil(s).



Best	Good	Acceptable
<p>Nebulizer - Follow the directions for your nebulizer. The essential oil can be added to the medicine/water tank of the nebulizer after the water has been added. Typically, it is advisable to add half the water and then 1-2 drops of oil, then add the remaining amount of water and another 2-3 drops of essential oil.</p>	<p>Steam bath - Boil a small pot of filtered water. As soon as water is boiling remove the pot from the heat source. Add 3-5 drops of essential oil to the water. Position yourself comfortably above the water with a towel draped over your head to trap steam. Inhale deeply for 10-15 minutes.</p>	<p>Chest inhalation - Combine 2-3 drops of essential oil with a carrier oil, such as almond oil. Rub the mixture onto the exposed chest. Lie down and inhale deeply for 10-15 minutes. The mixture may need to be reapplied after 5-8 minutes. Rinse if desired after the allotted time.</p>

There are many different essential oils that may be beneficial for asthma. The one that works for you may not be the same one that works for your BFF. Some asthma sufferers will do better with a warming essential oil, while others may need a cooling effect. Here are some of the most effective oils for asthma:

Rose (*Rosa damascena*) - (calming) has a relaxing effect on the body which can decrease anxiety, blood pressure, and heart rate. This calming effect may lower cortisol levels which have been shown to be elevated in asthma, especially just before an asthma attack.

Lavender (*Lavandula augustifolia*) - (cooling) has an anti-inflammatory effect on the bronchus which opens the airways (bronchodilation) making it easier to breathe.

Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*) - (cooling) has a soothing effect on bronchial tissue that leads to decreased inflammation and reduced mucus production.

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) - (warming) has a direct effect on the smooth muscles of the trachea, leading to more relaxed breathing. Long-term use may also lead to a decrease in coughing and sputum production.

NOTE: Always purchase 100% pure and natural essential oils, it takes an extremely large amount of plant materials to extract essential oils, so quality essential oils are usually expensive. Adulterated lower-quality oils may contain harmful compounds, especially when inhaled.