

# Aromatherapy by KG Stiles

## An Effective Complementary Treatment for Breast Cancer

*“And now here is my secret, a very simple secret; it is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”*

—Antoine De Saint-Exupery

Essential oils can be an effective complementary therapy when undergoing breast cancer treatment. Women can enjoy using essential oils to relieve the side effects of chemotherapy, and radiation. Aromatherapy has been shown to be an extraordinary comfort measure to support women navigating the challenging terrain from surviving to thriving.

In this article you will learn about essential oils, which one's to use for relieving specific conditions, along with recommended methods, and safety precautions. Please first consult with your oncologist and radiologist before using any complementary therapy.

### What Are Essential Oils?

Essential oils are the highly aromatic and volatile liquids found in the specialized cells or glands of plants, and extracted through distillation. Essential oils are extracted from flowers, seeds, leaves, stems, bark, roots of herbs, bushes, shrubs and trees, the part of the plant yielding the maximum amount of essential oil. Essential oils have evolved as protection for a plant against predators, and to attract pollinators. Some plants have an aroma, while others do not. Why this is so remains a mystery.

Essential oils represent the soul, or life force energy, of a plant. As such they are highly concentrated, a drop or two can produce significant results. These precious plant distillates are active nutrient resources within a plant, and act like blood to protect it from bacterial and viral infections, cleansing breaks in its tissue and delivering oxygen and nutrients to its cells. When the substance of scent is still in the plant, it is called an essence. After distillation the aromatic substance is referred to as an essential oil.



KG Stiles – Courtesy of David A. Gibb

### What is Aromatherapy?

Aromatherapy means to treat with aroma through inhalation. Essential oils are highly aromatic, and many of their benefits can be obtained simply by inhaling their aroma. Aroma reaches and influences the deepest human instincts. When essential oils are inhaled, aromatherapy delivers the benefits of fragrance, along with the many health benefits unique to essential oils.

In ancient times pure essential oils were considered more valuable than gold. The use of plants is the oldest form of healing, and the medicinal properties of plants have been recorded in the oldest historical writings. According to ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics and Chinese manuscripts, priests and physicians were using aromatics thousands of years before Christ to heal the sick. Probably the most well known purveyor of aroma in Egypt was Queen Cleopatra who became famous for her use of perfumes, healing balms, and beauty treatments.

Though there are numerous references to the use plant extracts in ancient texts, including the Bible, only now is science beginning to investigate the chemical properties and healing powers of essential oils. Virtually everything used in modern drugs can be traced back to a botanical source.



Hippocrates said there is a remedy for everything to be found in Nature.

Modern scientific research has proven that essential oils have remarkable medicinal properties. Pure essential oils are now being used successfully in hospitals and medical centers throughout the USA and around the globe. Aromatherapy is fast being recognized as a safe, inexpensive and complementary form of healthcare.

Aromatherapy Relieves Stress - Evidence Based Study Harris Methodist Fort Worth Hospital, where Aromatherapy is offered as a comfort measure and a complementary treatment, recently conducted research into the effects of clinical aromatherapy for work-related stress among ICU nurses. The outcome showed more than a 57 percent reduction in perceived stress levels by the nurses surveyed after using the essential oils.

Please Note: There are many cheap, synthetic copies of essential oils, but these are not recommended for therapeutic use. Synthetic derivatives although less expensive will never give you the desired results for therapeutic benefit, and may create adverse side effects such as allergic reactions. To achieve truly remarkable results essential oils must be absolutely pure and unadulterated. Please choose essential oils organically grown, GC/MS tested for purity, and pesticide free.

### Essential Oils for Incisions and Inflammation

Speed healing and regeneration, prevent inflammation, or infection of an incision after a lumpectomy or the surgical removal of a lymph gland, or glands. May use during radiation treatment to prevent scarring.

*Blue Tansy (Tanacetum anuum - Moroccan Blue Chamomile)* – Comforting, sweet aroma, reminiscent of apples with a hint of spice Blue Tansy's high chamazulene content gives it a vibrant blue color. Useful as an anti-inflammatory and analgesic Blue Tansy helps prevent scarring, and calms inflamed skin tissue.

*Lavender (Lavendula angustifolia)* – Sweet, floral scent Lavender is one of the best known and most used oils. For therapeutic use choose Lavender oil distilled at high altitudes as the lower temperatures and pressure for distilla-

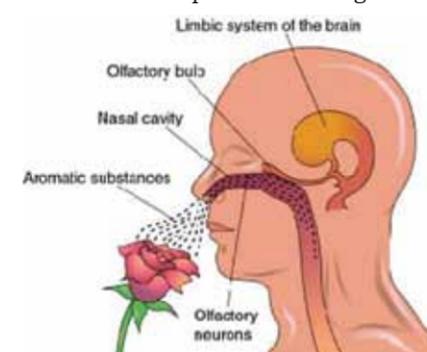
tion at higher elevations allows the precious phytochemicals to come through intact in the final product.

Lavender oil is the classic first aid oil for treating burns and known to prevent blistering, and scarring, as well as speed healing. In 1928 French perfumer and cosmetic chemist Rene-Maurice Gattefosse was researching essential oils for cosmetic purposes; he was convinced that the antimicrobial properties of many oils was greater than chemical pharmaceuticals. While working an explosion in his lab severely burned his hand, and he immersed it in a vat of lavender oil. Gattefosse was surprised that his burn healed rapidly with no infection or scar. During WWI Gattefosse used essential oils with patients in military hospitals, and published his findings in his book *Aromtherapie*, and is credited with coining the term “Aromatherapy.”

Lavender essential oil may be used to help balance moods and calm the

mind and emotions. Use Lavender for nervousness, stress, depression, fear, irritability, frustration, and anger. Add to your favorite shampoo to help reduce hair loss (8-15 drops per one ounce of shampoo).

*Helichrysum (Helichrysum italicum ssp serotinum)* – Warm, honey-like fragrance soothes the mind and emotions. The most powerful healing oil in



aromatherapy *Helichrysum's* ability to repair tissue, and accelerate the formation of new tissue is well documented. *Helichrysum* also helps prevent swelling, and relieves inflammation.

### Essential Oil for Nausea, Lethargy, and Headache

*Peppermint (Mentha piperita)* – A first aid oil Peppermint is fluid and colorless with a distinctly penetrating aroma. Peppermint's regulating properties act to relax, or invigorate depending upon the circumstances for which it is being used.

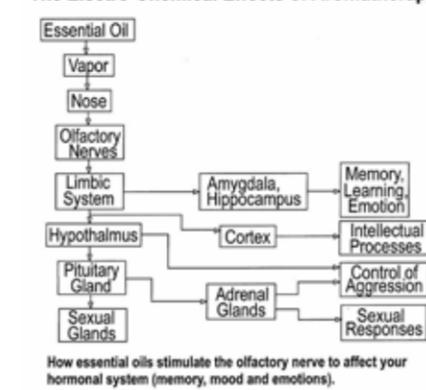
Most notably Peppermint aids focus and concentration, and is better than coffee as a stimulant. Research studies announced on CBS News reported that the smell of cinnamon, or peppermint oil can relax drivers' tension and fatigue while increasing alertness. Peppermint oil was also linked to minimizing driving frustration. Research has also shown Peppermint oil effective for relieving Migraine, and tension headache.

One of the most powerful vasoconstrictors in aromatherapy Peppermint oil is excellent for cooling hot conditions like hot flash, tired and achy legs, hands and feet. It is also an excellent Liver tonic and provides almost instant relief for nausea and indigestion!

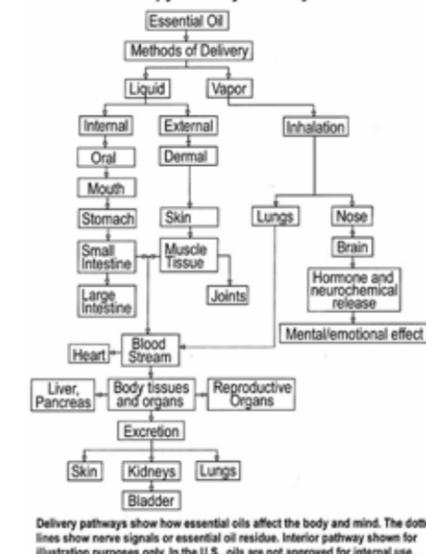
### How Aromatherapy Works

- 1) Aromatic oils stimulate your olfactory nerves which send a signal to your brain's neuro-receptors, triggering numerous electro-chemical responses throughout your hormonal system.
- 2) Through cellular respiration, or

### The Electro-Chemical Effects of Aromatherapy



### Aromatherapy Delivery Pathways



breathing, aromatic vapors enter your lungs for immediate release into your blood stream for distribution to every cell in your body.

### Methods of Application

Direct Inhalation is the method most often used by clinical aroma therapists practicing in hospitals and medical centers in the U.S. Research shows that essential oils will remain in your bloodstream for up to 4-6 hours after inhalation.

Dispense 1-3 drops of pure essential oil onto a cotton ball, or tissue, and introduce the oil into your system by breathing in the vapors for 30-60 seconds. Close your eyes and inhale. Breathe in slowly, and pause briefly on your inhaled breath. Then slowly exhale, letting go of any tension. Repeat this slow, rhythmic breathing five more times. Allow yourself to relax for a moment into a feeling of well-being.

Aromatherapy Mist to prevent or relieve radiation burns: Use this cooling, healing mist to prevent, or soothe radiation burns, or as a facial toner, all over body freshener, room spray or deodorizer. To a 2 ounce colored glass misting bottle filled with pure water (may add 1/8 tsp pure aloe vera gel as an emulsifier) add 3-7 drops each of Blue Tansy, *Helichrysum*, and Lavender. Shake well, and lightly mist onto the breast tissue.

- Facial Mist - 8-15 drops
- Body Mist - 20-40 drops
- Room Spray - 60-120 drops

May you come to know aromatherapy as a wonderful friend, you can rely on for unconditional love, support, and healing. All my love, KG ■

*KG Stiles is a Certified Aroma Therapist practicing in Ashland, Oregon, USA. She has utilized essential oils in her professional practice for more than 30 years, and is a specialist in formulating aromatherapy blends for healthy living. KG is a member of the Complementary Alternative Medicine (CAM) Team at Ashland Community Hospital which became affiliated with Planetree in 2006. The Planetree Organization helps hospitals provide patient-centered programs and care focused on healing and nurturing body, mind and spirit. Planetree philosophy integrates human caring with the best of scientific medicine and complementary healing traditions such as aromatherapy. More Info? Contact: KG Stiles at Springhill Wellness Center, Ashland, OR (541) 941-7315, or visit: www.pureplantessentials.com.*