



Internal Use of Essential Oils

IFPA does not endorse taking essential oils via ingestion or any other internal route. Taking essential oils internally is not included on the IFPA diploma teaching syllabus, which all IFPA-accredited schools are required to follow.

IFPA considers there to be potential safety risks in ingesting essential oils particularly regarding mouth, stomach and general gastric irritation. Ingestion also increases the risk of medication interactions and overdose, as far higher levels of the essential oil are absorbed by the body than by application via non-internal routes.

There are no universally agreed industry standards regarding the quality or grade of essential oils which deem them safe to be ingested. Ingestion includes drinking essential oil drops added to water or other fluids.

Undiluted Use of Essential Oils

Aromatherapy treatments which involve applying undiluted essential oils to the skin do not meet the criteria for safe practice set out by IFPA. In addition to the skin reaction risks outlined above, undiluted essential oils may pose additional risks to people with compromised liver or kidney function, with heart disease, on blood thinning medication and with allergies to aspirin or other disorders. IFPA does not recommend the undiluted use of essential oils on the skin as they are powerful, concentrated substances. Diluting the essential oils in a carrier reduces the risk of irritation and sensitisation (allergic) reactions.

Information Sources

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- Massachusetts State Board of Nursing. 2012. Advisory Ruling Number: 9801. Holistic Nursing and Complementary/Alternative Modalities
- Tisserand Institute (2015-19), *How to Use Essential Oils Safely: Oral ingestion*. Accessed 27/09/19, available from <https://tisserandinstitute.org/safety/safety-guidelines/>
- Tisserand Institute (2015-19), *How to Use Essential Oils Safely: Topical use and dilution*. Accessed 27/09/19, available from <https://tisserandinstitute.org/safety/safety-guidelines/>
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