

Maternity Department

Aromatherapy

A guide to the use of aromatherapy on the Midwife Led Birthing Unit (MLBU)

Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to give you and your birthing partner an insight into the use of aromatherapy during your labour and how it can be used to enhance your birthing experience.

Aromatherapy is a complimentary therapy using essential oils. Essential oils are concentrated components derived from plants and have been found to have a range of therapeutic benefits.

Aromatherapy is suitable for most women who are eligible to give birth on the MLBU. It should be used with caution for women with asthma, hay fever or skin allergies and for women prone to fainting or very low blood pressure. Please speak to your midwife if you have any concerns.

It is recommended that the blends provided are not administered by birth supporters who are pregnant themselves.

What are the benefits of aromatherapy?

- Aids relaxation and wellbeing, reducing fear and tension in labour
- Provides a natural form of pain relief
- Can help you to feel more energised and positive
- May help to speed up your labour
- May help ease nausea (feeling sick)
- Allows your partner to be involved with the use of aromatherapy and massage

How will the essential oils be used?

Initially the aromatherapy will be administered under the direction of your midwife.

- If you are in the early stages of labour and returning home, the oils can be used for massage or added to the bath as advised by the midwife.
- At any stage in labour, they can be used via massage to the back, shoulders, arms, hands, legs, abdomen or feet according to your preference. Your midwife will be able to show your birthing partner useful massage techniques.
- A few drops can be applied to a gauze compress for you to breathe in.

Which oils are offered?

Clary Sage can help relieve anxiety, tension and fear. It is calming and uplifting and also improves contractions in labour.

Frankincense can be used to help calm nerves, balance emotions and ease fear.

Lavender helps to calm you, reduce pain and ease headaches. It may improve contractions in labour.

Black pepper helps relieve pain in labour.

Ylang Ylang is calming, relaxing and helps with the emotional side of labour.

Mandarin has pain-relieving properties.

Jasmine can be used to help reduce anxiety, relieve pain and improve contractions.

Grapefruit combats fear and anxiety.

Bergamot can help to reduce pain in labour and has a calming effect.

Peppermint is good for pain relief in labour and can help with nausea (feeling sick). It can improve contractions in labour.

CAUTION!

- **Do not use these oils without advice from an aromatherapy trained midwife.**
- **If you take oils home, they must be stored in a safe place out of the reach of children.**
- **Unused oils should be discarded within 1 month.**

Contact details: Midwife Led Birthing Unit 01603 286260 (24 hours)

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