

Maternity Department

Aromatherapy

A guide to the use of aromatherapy in your labour

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 complementary therapy which uses essential oils. Essential oils are natural oils, extracted from plant materials and have been found to have a range of therapeutic benefits.

Not all essential oils are safe in pregnancy but aromatherapy is safe when the correct oils are used appropriately. It is suitable for most women who are eligible to give birth on the MLBU and at home and for many women who give birth on Delivery Suite but there are some situations where the use of aromatherapy in your labour would not be considered safe. If you are interested in using aromatherapy in your labour, your midwife will check if it is safe for you and be able to answer any questions that you might have.

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 aromatherapy trained midwife.

- If you are in the early stages of labour and returning home, you may be given the rest of your oil blend to use at home as advised by the midwife.

One way of using the oils is through relaxing and pain relieving massage, your midwife will be able to show your birthing partner useful massage techniques if this is your preference or you may simply chose to receive the benefits of the oils through inhaling them.

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Which oils are offered?

- **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 help also help to improve contractions in labour if needed in combination with other oils.
- **Black pepper** Very effective to help relieve pain in labour.
- **Ylang Ylang** is calming and relaxing and helps with the emotional side of labour.
- **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).
- **Clary Sage** can help relieve anxiety, tension and fear. It is calming and uplifting and when necessary may be used to help improve or encourage contractions in labour.

CAUTION!

- **It is not recommended that you use essential oils without advice from an aromatherapy trained midwife or an aromatherapist who is specifically trained in maternity aromatherapy.**
- **If you take oils home, they must be stored in a safe place, out of the reach of children and used only as advised.**
- **Unused oils should be discarded after their expiry date.**

For any queries please contact

Midwife Led Birthing Unit 01603 286260 (24 hours)

Donations

We hope that you find the aromatherapy service beneficial, it is outside of NHS provision and is funded entirely by voluntary donations. If you would like to support its availability, please contact the MLBU on 01603 286260 to find out the most up to date method of donating.

