

holistic healing

Aromatherapy profile

Smell comfort

Aromatherapy for cancer patients

Bev Gray



"Camomile helps relieve anxiety, headaches, insomnia, stress, and tension."

Undergoing treatment for cancer can be extremely stressful, as well as taxing on the immune system.

Chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery are all physically demanding and can make cancer patients more vulnerable to contracting colds, flu, sore throats, and other infections. Treatment may also induce psychological unrest, including sleeplessness, anxiety, fear, or depression.

Aromatherapy can help support the body, mind, and spirit during this difficult time by helping to ease many of the common side effects of cancer treatment.

Therapeutic essential oils can also play a comforting role in bringing the outdoors in for patients who are homebound. Try using the following essential oils in a bath, atmosphere spray, massage oil, or a diffuser to help treat individual symptoms.

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)

A versatile essential oil, lavender has

numerous benefits for those undergoing cancer treatment. It is relaxing and balancing for both the mind and body. It aids sleep, soothes tired muscles, and benefits the immune system. It has excellent healing and antiseptic properties and is often used to treat cuts and wounds. Lavender is one of the few oils that can be used directly on the skin. Avoid use if you are pregnant or have low blood pressure.

Camomile (*Anthemis nobilis*)

Characterized by a sweet, fresh, fruity fragrance, camomile is noted in aromatherapy for treating anxiety, headaches, insomnia, stress, and tension. It is an anti-inflammatory, an immune stimulant, and is excellent for use on dry, sensitive skin.

Bergamot (*Citrus bergamia*)

Ideal for use during stressful times, bergamot has a fresh, sweet, fruity

aroma and has the ability to create a bright and uplifting atmosphere when diffused in a room. It is particularly effective for helping treat infections, depression, and anxiety. Do not apply directly to the skin; use a carrier oil. Bergamot can irritate the skin if applied before going out into the sun.

Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*)

Considered the oil of respiration, eucalyptus is best known as a decongestant for coughs and colds. It is a very powerful bactericidal with anti-viral properties. Eucalyptus is an excellent immune stimulant and is good for people who are tired, rundown, and prone to frequent colds. Eucalyptus can be used in a bath or in a massage oil for sore muscles, aches, and pains. Avoid if you are pregnant or have epilepsy or high blood pressure.

Essential oil applications

Create your own aromatherapy potions for massage, bath, or spray.

Massage

Touch can play a crucial role in re-establishing the mind-body relationship. Ask a friend or family member to massage you.

Calming camomile massage oil

6 drops bergamot
6 drops lavender
6 drops camomile
30 mL sunflower oil
Mix essential oils with sunflower oil in a 30 mL bottle.

Bath

A creamy, hot, soothing aromatherapy milk bath can help relax a worried mind, soothe a tired body, and lift a sad spirit.

Uplifting aromatherapy bath

6 drops orange
6 drops bergamot

6 drops lavender
4 drops ravsara
4 drops eucalyptus
2 cups milk powder
2 cups sea salt

Mix milk powder and sea salt together, and stir in essential oils before pouring into a tub full of warm water.

Atmosphere sprays

Essential oils work well in a spray bottle to mist the air around you. Make sure to avoid contact with the eyes.

Anti-microbial spray

10 drops orange
10 drops bergamot
8 drops eucalyptus
6 drops tea tree
4 drops ravsara
2 drops peppermint
Mix in 60 mL of distilled water and add to a spray bottle. Shake before each use.

Orange (*Citrus sinensis*)

An uplifting, sweet citrus oil, orange is emotionally warming and comforting. Its natural antiseptic properties cleanse and rejuvenate. It has antibacterial, antidepressant, anti-inflammatory and sedative properties. Used in a diffuser, it creates a bright atmosphere. Orange oil may irritate sensitive skin, so apply to skin with a carrier oil.

Ravsara (*Ravsara aromatica*)

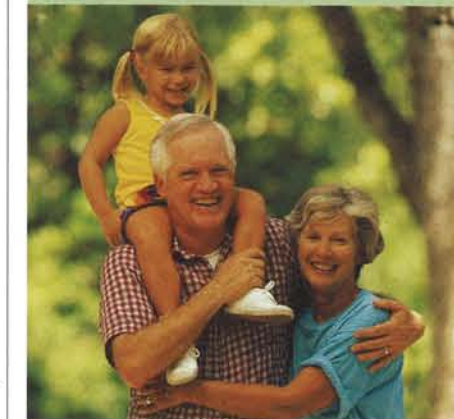
Ravsara has strong antiviral properties, making it particularly effective

against flu. It helps treat respiratory tract infections, including sinusitis, bronchitis and catarrhal conditions, and is useful for people who are overtired, depressed, or lethargic.

Tea tree (*Melaleuca alternifolia*)

Tea tree oil has very powerful antiseptic and immune-stimulating properties. It disinfects and deodorizes. It has anti-infectious, anti-inflammatory, antiviral and antibacterial properties. **a**

Bev Gray is a herbalist, registered aromatherapist, and educator with a passion for medicinal and aromatic plants. She owns Aroma Borealis Herb Shop in Whitehorse, Yukon. yukonherbshop.com.



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