

The use of Essential Oils and Massage to help with your Labour

Any Further Questions?

If you want anymore information about this service please discuss it with your community midwife.

Introduction

This leaflet is designed to give you, your partner and your family an insight into the benefits and safe use of essential oils and massage for your labour and the service that is offered to you by Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

What are Essential Oils and Massage?

Essential oils are highly concentrated components derived from plants that have a range of therapeutic properties and may help you during labour

Massage involves manipulation of soft tissues for medical or therapeutic purpose or simply as an aid for relaxation

What are the benefits of using essential oils and/or massage in labour?

- To aid relaxation and reduce fear and tension in labour
- To provide a natural form of pain relief in labour and facilitate normal birth
- May help to speed up your labour
- To help ease physical discomfort in labour such as nausea and headaches

What service is offered to you in labour when you are in hospital?

An optional service is available whereby policies are in place and some of the midwives are trained to advise and administer essential oils to you during your labour.

Your midwife will be happy to discuss this service with you during the antenatal period as part of your preparation for your labour and birth. The service requires your consent.

How will the Essential Oils be used?

There are various ways that the essential oils can be administered:

- In the bath/footbath
- Via massage-your midwife will be able to show your birthing partner useful massage techniques.
- Via a droplet on the palm of the hand or forehead
- Via hot or cold compress using a flannel
- Via a droplet on a taper or pillow
- By douche on stitches following delivery

What oils are offered? And what are their properties?

- **Bergamot:** Is an oil with strong antiseptic properties and can help reduce pain in labour and have a calming effect
- **Clary Sage:** This oil has a sweet, nutty smell and can help reduce pain, fear and tension and may also help speed up your labour
- **Frankincense:** An excellent oil for calming nervous tension and hyperventilation and also helps to balance emotions
- **Jasmine:** A wonderful oil for reducing anxiety and reducing pain, may also help speed up labour
- **Lavender:** A good all round oil that helps calm, relax and reduce pain and headaches and may also help speed up labour
- **Peppermint:** A cooling, refreshing oil, useful for sickness and nausea during labour and can also help clear headaches
- **Rose:** Wonderful in reducing anxiety and enhancing positive feelings

CAUTION! DO NOT: try to self administer these oils – they should only be administered by someone trained to do so and may cause serious harm to yourself or your baby if misused

Can everyone use Essential Oils & Massage in their labour?

Women who have had a normal pregnancy are in labour and are between 37-42 weeks gestation can use essential oils however there are some medical and pregnancy conditions and some labour complications that are contraindicated with the use of essential oils. Your midwife will be able to advise you personally on whether this is a suitable service for you. The service is also dependent on availability of trained staff.

Can I use Essential Oils & Massage alongside conventional/pharmacological pain relief?

Yes. Your midwife will be able to advise you at the time of what would be beneficial.

Can I use Essential Oils if I am having a Caesarean?

Yes. Essential oils can be very calming if used prior to your caesarean section. Your midwife will be able to advise you.

Can I bring my own oils in to use?

No. The oils we use are from a highly reputable supplier to ensure quality, safety and accuracy in prescribing.

Things you may wish to bring into hospital that maybe useful if you wish to make use of this service

- Flannels
- Hand Towel