What You Need to Know About Using Essential Oils for ADHD

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Using Essential Oils to Help Manage Symptoms of ADHD

While there is not a lot of scientific research to support claims that essential oils help the symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), there are many people who incorporate essential oils into their treatment plans.

Essential oils are believed to have many health benefits, and several oils can help with the sleeplessness, anxiety, lack of focus and poor memory that can accompany ADHD.

How Do Essential Oils Help the Symptoms of ADHD?

Essential oils, concentrated forms of compounds found in various plants, possibly work by sending chemical messages to areas of the brain that affect mood and emotions. Different plants have different properties and can help improve focus, energize the mind, produce feelings of calm and lift mood.

How to Use Essential Oils for ADHD

Essential oils can be inhaled by putting a few drops in a diffuser, by wearing a bracelet or necklace designed for oils, and sometimes by breathing from the bottle, a handkerchief, or cotton ball.

Oils can also be used topically. Oils should be mixed with a carrier oil, such as almond oil, to reduce chance of skin irritation and then rubbed directly onto the body. Popular areas to apply oils are on wrists, across the forehead, bottoms of the feet and sometimes the chest or palms.

Beneficial Essential Oils for ADHD

There are several popular oils for reducing symptoms of ADHD. You can purchase these oils and use alone, mix them, or they can be purchased in mixtures designed to enhance focus, sleep, or other common problem areas.

Some of the oils commonly used to help with ADHD are:

- Lavender.
- Rosemary.
- Vetiver.
- Cedarwood.
- Orange.
- Chamomile.
- Ylang-ylang.
- Sandalwood.
- Frankincense.

- Peppermint.

Essential oils have been used for centuries around the world but were not very common in the U.S. until around the 1980s.

What Can Specific Essential Oils Do?

The use of essential oils is growing in popularity as more people begin to explore their uses and benefits.

Rosemary oil has long been used for its powerful effects on the entire body. Using rosemary in a diffuser is linked to enhanced memory, as well as a reduction in the amount of cortisol (a stress hormone) in the body.

Lavender is widely recognized for its calming properties. You can find many products on the market containing lavender, and many people enjoy the scent. Diffusing lavender at bedtime can promote sleep. It can also be spritzed onto bed linens or put on a cotton ball beside the bed. Another use for lavender is to relieve anxiety from stressful situations.

Cedarwood, sandalwood, orange, ylang-ylang, and chamomile all have relaxing properties and are beneficial for reducing stress and anxiety. Whether used in a diffuser or topically, these oils can promote relaxation and possibly lower blood pressure.

While no studies have been done on humans on the use of frankincense for anxiety, stress, or memory, it has been shown to have positive effects in rats. Even without tests to prove results, many swear by the power of frankincense to improve mental clarity as well as reduce stress, anxiety and depression. As with any essential oil, skin tests should be done to test for an allergy if you are planning to use this oil on the skin.

Peppermint is believed to soothe the nervous system, providing benefits for those with anxiety or excess stress. Peppermint should be used with caution, however, as it can trigger allergic reactions, dizziness, or slow heartbeat. Consult with your doctor about the use of peppermint essential oil.

A study published in the Journal of Intercultural Ethnopharmacology measured effects of inhaling vetiver. Tests showed an increase in attention levels which were reflected in measurements of brain activity. Vetiver is a popular essential oil for boosting memory and focus for those with ADHD.

Finding out If Essential Oils for ADHD Are Right for You

While more testing needs to be done, it is encouraging to see results on brain activity from the use of essential oils. As more people turn to natural remedies and holistic healing, tests offer proof of the merit of essential oils.

The proof, however, may be in simply whether or not they work for you. Learning which, if any, oils alleviate symptoms could create another tool for managing your ADHD.

If you are looking for a holistic approach to treating ADHD, or if you want to supplement your existing treatment with essential oils, it is worth looking into.

Essential oils should be used as part of your ADHD treatment plan that also includes proper nutrition, behavioral management, exercise, and even medication – if medication is right for you.

It is important to speak to your doctor before using essential oils, especially if you are considering them for your child. Some oils should not be used on young children, and while with most oils there would be no interaction between them and medication, it is always a good idea to tell your doctor of anything you are using.