

Safe Essential Oil Use With Babies & Children

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I am a mama hear me roar. All I want for my baby, is health, happiness, and the chance for him to experience life to its fullest without any pain or suffering. It's really what all mamas out there want for their children. The hardest thing about being a parent is making decisions for my son that could affect those things. Keeping him healthy and safe can be a difficult task, and using essential oils to help naturally heal him is no exception. As we learned in the last post, [Introduction to Essential Oil Safety](#), essential oils, no matter the quality or brand of the oil, are an **extremely concentrated combination of multiple chemical constituents** and therefore require a certain amount of concern with safety when using them. This week we are going to learn about safe essential oil use with babies and children! All of the safety rules we outlined in the last post, still stand true with children, but we must be even more careful when using essential oils around babies and children. Essential oils should be much more diluted for use with babies as compared to use with adults. With so many different types of one plant, it's important to use the correct species of essential oil. To make this easier for you and to take out the guesswork, I have added the Latin names of the essential oils that I list. All of the Latin names listed are the type of that essential oil that is deemed safe for use. When purchasing essential oils, be sure to note the Latin name of the essential oil you are purchasing, to make sure you are getting the right one.



Babies and Children should never ingest essential oils

Keep all essential oils out of reach of children and babies. Certain essential oils could be toxic if ingested. **No essential oils should be given orally to children.** According to Robert Tisserand, Essential Oil Safety;

The majority of cases of essential oil poisoning involve accidents with young children, often between 1 and 3 years of age. Approximately 75% of cases in the USA are in children up to 6 years old.

If your child accidentally ingests some essential oils, **DO NOT INDUCE VOMITING**. Call your general practitioner unless signs of poisoning are present, then you should immediately bring your child and the bottle that was consumed, to the nearest emergency room. You can read more about ingesting essential oils in my post [The Case for Ingestion – Is Ingesting Essential Oils Safe?](#)

Dilution is very important for ALL essential oils

There is no exception in this category. No matter what brand you use, what essential oil it is, or how much you are using, it is not safe to use ANY essential oil neat (without a carrier oil or some other dilution material). **ALL essential oils should be diluted for use with babies and children.** It is also important to note that when adding essential oils to baths of children, they must first be diluted in a water soluble carrier, such as raw unfiltered honey or vegetable glycerin. Adding essential oils straight to bath water, without a carrier, runs you the risk of causing irritation to the skin. There are many applications for essential oils with babies and

children, but they should be kept away from a child's face. **Essential oils should not be used in or around the nose in children.** I often suggest massaging the feet with young babies rather than the chest and back, for the safest application of essential oils.

Slowly introduce one essential oil at a time

Allergies are no fun. When introducing essential oils to babies, you have to remember that you haven't yet discovered the things they are allergic to. It's important to introduce essential oils one at a time and sparingly, to both watch your baby for any sort of reaction and to allow your baby's body to slowly become introduced to that essential oil. Do not introduce more than one essential oil in one day. If your baby is going to have a reaction to an essential oil they will likely show signs of a reaction in the first 15-30 minutes after inhalation or dermal application.

What age is safe to use what oils?

This is a question that has run through my mind so often in the last three years. Through all of my reading, I have found quite a bit of good information, but there is still very little known about the use of many essential oils on babies and children. It is best to use your judgment when choosing essential oils for your child. I have spent hours pouring over my essential books and school materials, to find as much information about each of the most commonly found essential oils that you can purchase on the market. I based a lot of the information provided below, upon the most up to date essential oil safety research that is detailed in [Essential Oil Safety – By Robert Tisserand and Rodney Young](#).

It is not advised to use essential oils on babies less than 3 months of age because their skin is not mature yet and therefore more permeable and sensitive to essential oils. Unlike adults, newborns are also not as capable of dealing with adverse reactions to essential oils. There should be even more caution with premature babies, avoiding all essential oil use until they reach at least 3 months after their due date. This is just a general guideline and great care should be taken to research each essential oil's maximum dermal use individually before use. Hydrosols are a much gentler and safer option for babies, where essential oils can't be used.

Essential oils safe for topical use/diffusion on babies 3+ months

The maximum recommended amount of essential oils used on babies 3+ months topically, should not exceed .2% of the recipe, or 1-2 drops of essential oil per ounce of [carrier oil](#).

- **Chamomile, Roman and German** (*Anthemis nobilis*, *Matricaria rectutita*)
- **Dill** (*Anthum graveolens*)
- **Lavender** – (*Lavendula angustifolia*)
- **Yarrow, Blue** (*Achillea millefolium*)

Essential oils safe for topical use/diffusion on babies 6+ months

This is just a general guideline and great care should be taken to research each essential oil's maximum dermal use individually before use. The maximum recommended amount of essential oils used on babies 6+ months topically, should not exceed .5% of the recipe, or 3-5 drops of essential oil per ounce of carrier oil.

- **Bergamot** (*Citrus bergamia*) bergamot essential oil is a phototoxic oil and can cause phototoxic reactions on your skin if used before going out in the sunshine. diffusion and wash-off products are safe.
- **Carrot Seed** (*Daucus carota*)
- **Cedarwood, Atlas/Virgiana** (*Cedrus atlantica, Cedrus deodora, Juniperus virginiana*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Cinnamon bark** (*Cinnamomum verum*) this is safe for **diffusion ONLY**. Cinnamon bark is not safe for use on anyone's skin, as it is too irritating. Use Cinnamon leaf instead, for topical preparations!
- **Cinnamon leaf** (*Cinnamomum verum*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Citronella** (*Cymbopogon nardus*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Coriander** (*Coriandrum sativum*)
- **Cypress** (*Cupressus sempervires*)
- **Fir needle** (*Abies sibirica*)
- **Geranium** (*Pelargonium graveolens*)
- **Grapefruit** (*Citrus paradisi*)
- **Helichrysum** (*Helichrysum angustifolium*)
- **Lemon** (*Citrus limon*) this is safe for diffusion. Though this is safe for topical application, sweet orange is suggested instead, because it's less harsh on the skin. If cold pressed rather than steam distilled, this essential oil is a potential photosensitizer.
- **Mandarin** (*Citrus reticulata*)
- **Neroli** (*Citrus aurantium*)
- **Palma Rosa** (*Cymbopogon martinii*)
- **Petitgrain** (*Citrus aurantium*)
- **Pine** (*pinus divaricata, pinus resinosa, pinus strobus, pinus sylvestris*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Ravensara** (*Ravensara aromatica*)
- **Rosalina** (*Melaleuca ericifolia*)
- **Rose Otto** (*Rosa damascena*)
- **Sandalwood** (*Santalum spicatum*)
- **Spruce** (*picea abies, picea glauca, picea mariana, picea rubens*)
- **Sweet Orange** (*Citrus sinensis*)
- **Tangerine** (*Citrus reticulata*)
- **Tea Tree** (*Melaleuca alternifolia*)

Essential oils safe for topical use/diffusion on children 2+ years

This is just a general guideline and great care should be taken to research each essential oil's maximum dermal use individually before use. The maximum recommended amount of essential oils used on children 2+ years topically, should not exceed 2% of the recipe, or 20 drops of essential oil per ounce of carrier oil.

- **Basil, Lemon** (*Ocimum x citriodorum*)
- **Basil, Sweet** (*Ocimum basilicum*)
- **Benzoin** (*Styrax benzoin, Styrax paralleloneurus*)
- **Black Pepper** (*Piper nigrum*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Cassia** (*Cinnamomum cassia*) this is safe ONLY for diffusion. Cinnamon cassia is not safe for use on anyone's skin, as it is too irritating. Use Cinnamon leaf instead, for topical preparations
- **Clary Sage** (*Salvia sclarea*)
- **Clove Bud/Clove Leaf** (*Syzygium aromaticum, Eugenia aromatica, Eugenia caryophyllata*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Copaiba Basalm** (*Copaifera officinalis*)
- **Frankincense** (*Boswellia carterii*)
- **Garlic** (*Allium sativum*) this is best for diffusion because it can cause skin irritations when applied topically.
- **Ginger** (*Zingiber officinale*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Hyssop** (*Hyssopus officinalis*)
- **Juniper Berry** (*Juniperus communis*)
- **Lemongrass** (*Andropogon citratus, Andropogon flexuosus, Cymbopogon citratus, Cymbopogon flexuosus*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Lime** (*Citrus x aurantifolia*)
- **Melissa/Lemon Balm** (*Melissa officinalis*)
- **Myrrh** (*Commiphora myrrha*)
- **Oregano** (*Origanum onites, Origanum smyrnaeum, Origanum vulgare, Origanum compactum, Origanum hirtum, Thymbra capitata, Thymus capitatus, Coridothymus capitatus, Satureeja capitata*)
- **Sweet Marjoram** (*Marjorana hortensis*)
- **Patchouli** (*Pogostemon cablin*)
- **Spearmint** (*Mentha cardiaca, Mentha spicata*)
- **Tea Tree, Lemon** (*Leptospermum petersonii, Leptospermum citratum, Leptospermum liversidgei*)
- **Thyme** (*Thymus vulgaris, Thymus Zygis*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Tumeric** (*Curcuma longa*)
- **Verbena, Lemon** (*Aloysia triphylla, Aloysia citriodora, Lippa citriodora, Lippa triphylla*)
- **Vetiver** (*Vetiveria zizanoides*)

- **Valerian** (*Valeriana officinalis*)
- **Ylang Ylang** (*Cananga odorata*) this can be diffused for children under 2 years

Essential oils safe for topical use/diffusion on children 6+ years

This is just a general guideline and great care should be taken to research each essential oil's maximum dermal use individually before use. The maximum recommended amount of essential oils used on children 6+ years topically, should not exceed 3% of the recipe, or 30 drops of essential oil per ounce of carrier oil.

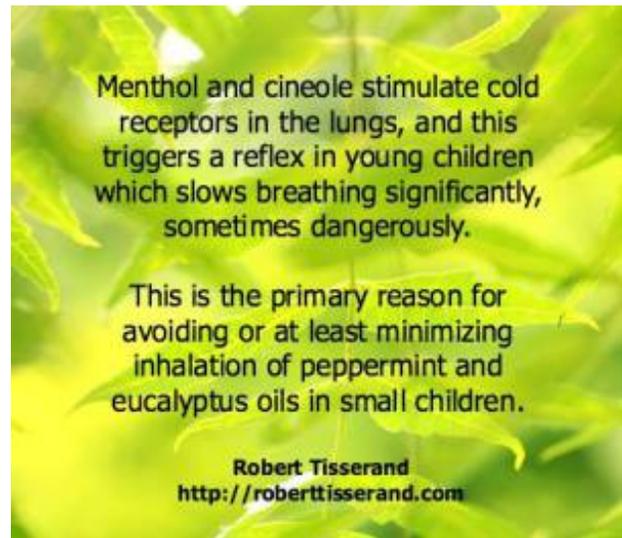
- **Anise/Aniseed** (*Pimpinella anisum*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Anise, Star** (*Illicium verum*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Cajeput** (*Melaleuca cajuputi*, *Melaleuca leucadendron*)
- **Cardamom** (*Elettaria cardamomum*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Cornmint** (*Mentha arvensis*, *Mentha canadensis*)
- **Fennel, sweet and bitter** (*Foeniculum vulgare*)
- **Laurel Leaf/Bay Laurel** (*Laurus nobilis*)
- **Marjoram, Spanish** (*Thymus mastichina*)
- **Niaouli** (*cineole chemotype*)
- **Nutmeg** (*Myristica fragrans*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Peppermint** (*Mentha x piperita*) use a smaller amount of this topically as it can cause skin irritation if not properly diluted.
- **Sage, Greek/White** (*Salvia officinalis*, *Salvia fruiticosa*, *Salvia tribola*, *Salvia apiana*)

Essential oils safe for topical use/diffusion on children 10+ years

By this age, most of the essential oils are safe for topical use or diffusion for children, though you should always be sure to slowly introduce each oil individually, to be sure that there are no adverse reactions or allergies. Peppermint, eucalyptus, and rosemary essential oils are all avoided in younger children because they contain a chemical constituent called cineol 1,8 and menthol. According to Robert Tisserand, in the newest edition of Essential Oil Safety:

This is the reason that it is suggested to avoid the use of these essential oils (and others containing a high content of these chemical constituents) in young children. Peppermint is safe to use at 6+ years, but ALL eucalyptus and rosemary essential oils should be avoided until 10+ years of age. It's important to note that the brand of essential oil you choose to use does not change this recommendation.

- **Eucalyptus** (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, *Eucalyptus globulus*, *Eucalyptus maidenii*, *Eucalyptus plenissima*, *Eucalyptus kochii*, *Eucalyptus polybractea*, *Eucalyptus radiata*, *Eucalyptus australiana*, *Eucalyptus phellandra*, *Eucalyptus smithii*)
- **Rosemary** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)



Thieves blends should be avoided in children under 10 years

All of the anti-germ type Thieves blends of essential oils contain eucalyptus, rosemary, clove, cinnamon bark, and lemon. The eucalyptus and rosemary essential oils should be avoided in children under ten years of age. The clove essential oil shouldn't be used topically on children under 2 years of age. Cinnamon bark essential oil should be avoided for dermal use in all ages, as it is too irritating to the skin, cinnamon leaf is recommended instead. For a child-safe version of this anti-germ blend and a eucalyptus-free congestion blend, I share my [Medicine Woman Jr.](#) and my [Cool Vibes Vapor Rub Jr.](#) here!

Safe EO blends for children

I have a ton of great kid-safe essential oil blends and projects for you to make on your own, but if you don't have all the oils on hand, [Plant Therapy](#) has some wonderful kid-safe blends that you can purchase, already blended for you! I am a big fan of the Nighty Night blend!



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