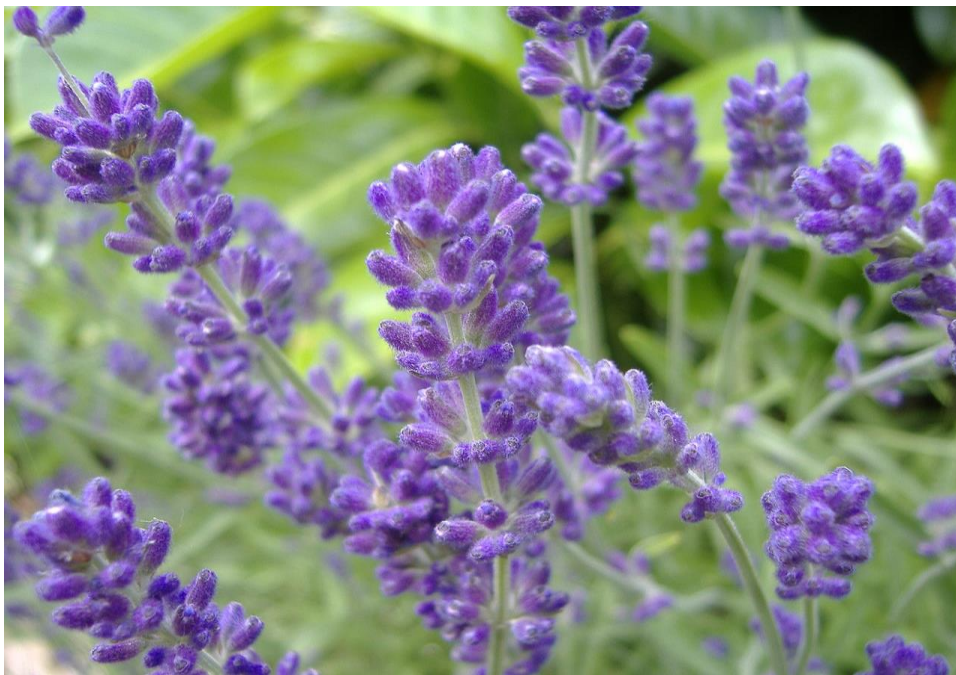




# Aromatherapy and the use of Essential Oils in Labour

## Patient Information Leaflet



**May 2019**

### **What is aromatherapy?**

Aromatherapy is a complementary therapy which uses essential oils, extracted from plants for their therapeutic benefits. The use of essential oils in labour has been shown to contribute to a positive birth experience and promotes relaxation by reducing stress and anxiety.

### **What are the benefits of aromatherapy?**

Research has shown that the use of essential oils may

- Reduce the duration of labour
- Reduce the need for additional pain relief in labour such as pethidine and epidural
- Reduce anxiety, fear and pain
- Promote relaxation

### **How are the oils applied?**

The oils can be administered in a number of ways including:

- Baths or footbaths ( not the birthing pool)
- By hot or cold compress
- By massage
- By inhalation methods

Massage blends can be created by trained midwives for you to use in labour. The carrier oil used is grape seed oil.

### **Who can use aromatherapy in labour?**

If your pregnancy has been uncomplicated and your labour is expected to be straightforward then you may be able to use essential oils in labour. It will also depend on if the midwife caring for you has been trained to offer aromatherapy.

### **Are there any side effects?**

Some essential oils are harmful during pregnancy, therefore we always recommend that you gain advice from a trained midwife/aromatherapist prior to administration. The oils offered have been chosen for their safety and therapeutic properties. Your midwife can advise you on which aromatherapy blend and method of administration will be most appropriate.

A large research study has found that a small amount of women (approximately 1%) experienced side effects following administration of essential oils. This included nausea and vomiting, headache and allergic reaction. It is not known if these symptoms may have occurred without the use of aromatherapy.

If you would like to use aromatherapy during your labour, please discuss this with your midwife.

Contact numbers:

Midwifery Led Care 0161 922 4921

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

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Document control information

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