

ESSENTIAL OIL DILUTION CHART & GUIDELINES



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Why dilute essential oils?

Though there are times when certain oils can be applied "neat," or undiluted, in general dilution is recommended for topical use. Diluting has two primary benefits:

- It may increase absorption by spreading the oil over a larger surface area
- It decreases the likelihood of a negative reaction

When is it appropriate to use oils "neat"?

Certain situations that affect small areas, such as a burn, bug bite, or forehead tension may benefit from the occasional use of undiluted oils.

I've used a drop of undiluted tea tree (*Melaleuca alternifolia*) to soothe a bug bite. Tea tree and lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) are typically considered the safest options for neat application. Some oils - ylang ylang and lemongrass, for example - are very likely to cause a reaction and should never be applied undiluted.

How do I dilute for regular use?

Carrier oils such as coconut, fractionated coconut, avocado, grapeseed, sweet almond, hazelnut and jojoba oil are ideally suited for diluting to safe topical levels. We'll cover how many drops of essential oil to add to your carrier oil later in this post.

Diffusion or topical application - which one is better?

It depends on what you want to accomplish. According to Robert Tisserand, inhaling essential oils is a very efficient way to absorb them quickly into the bloodstream.

"Inhaled substances pass down the trachea into the bronchi, and from there into finer and finer bronchioles, ending at the microscopic sac-like alveoli of the lungs, where gaseous exchange with the lungs mainly takes place.

The alveoli are extremely efficient at transporting small molecules, such as essential oil constituents, into the blood." (Essential Oil Safety, p. 49)

A good rule of thumb for diffusing is 30-60 minutes on, one hour off, then repeat if desired.

Topical application is considered a better choice when you want to directly benefit the skin, or when you prefer for absorption to occur over a longer period of time. (It takes time for essential oils to get through the skin.)

How To Dilute Essential Oils For Topical Application

The dilution guide below is based on information found in Essential Oil Safety along with input from a clinical aromatherapist. Please note that these are guidelines and not rules. The individual needs of a person and the oil being used should also be considered.

Also, just because 1% dilution (1 drop of essential oil per teaspoon of carrier oil) is considered appropriate for a situation does not mean that all essential oils can be used at that concentration. For example, clove bud essential oil can be irritating if used over a 0.5% dilution (1 drop in 2 teaspoons of carrier oil). If you don't have a copy of Essential Oil Safety, you can find the maximum recommended dilution for many popular essential oils by going to www.momypotamus.com and entering "safe essential oils children" and "safe essential oils pregnancy" into the search bar located in the top right corner of the homepage.

| ESSENTIAL OIL DILUTION CHART | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|------|----|------|----|----|-----|-----|
| Dilution | 1% | 1.5% | 2% | 2.5% | 3% | 5% | 10% | 25% |
| Drops of EO for 1 tsp (5ml; 1/6 oz) carrier oil | 1 | N/A | 2 | N/A | 3 | 5 | 10 | 25 |
| Drops of EO for 2 tsp (10ml; 1/3 oz) carrier oil | 2 | N/A | 4 | N/A | 6 | 10 | 20 | 50 |
| Drops of EO for 3 tsp (15ml; 1/2 oz) carrier oil | 3 | N/A | 6 | N/A | 9 | 15 | 30 | 75 |
| Drops of EO for 4 tsp (20ml; 2/3 oz) carrier oil | 4 | N/A | 8 | N/A | 12 | 20 | 40 | 100 |
| Drops of EO for 5 tsp (25ml; 5/6 oz) carrier oil | 5 | N/A | 10 | N/A | 15 | 25 | 50 | 125 |
| Drops of EO for 6 tsp (30ml; 1 oz) carrier oil | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 30 | 60 | 150 |

In general, here are some guidelines I have found helpful when deciding how much to use in a particular situation:

.25% dilution - For children age 3 months to 2 years. Aromatherapists often prefer hydrosols to essential oils when considering topical application for children under two. However, there are many oils that can be diffused safely and applied topically when used appropriately. You can find a list of some of the most popular ones by going to www.mommypotamus.com and entering "safe essential oils for children" in the search bar located in the top right corner of the homepage. I personally would not apply essential oils topically to a child under three months old. As essential oil experts Robert Tisserand and Rodney Young explain:

Great caution is necessary for infants. Since neonatal skin does not mature until three months of age, it is more sensitive and more permeable to essential oils. A newborn is also less equipped to deal with any adverse effects than an adult because of lower metabolic capacity, i.e., enzymes present in lower concentrations. (11) These cautions apply even more to premature babies, and here it would be prudent to avoid all use of essential oils." (Essential Oil Safety, p. 48-49)

1% dilution – For children two through six and individuals who need to take a more gentle path, such as those who are working to heal from serious health concerns or may have compromised immune function. This dilution is also a good rule of thumb for pregnant/nursing women, but in some cases a dilution of up to 2.5% may be appropriate. For more information on using essential oils during pregnancy/breastfeeding, go to www.mommypotamus.com and enter "safe essential oils pregnancy" into the search bar located in the top right corner of the homepage.

1.5% dilution – For children ages six through fifteen. For ease of use, I sometimes round down to a 1% dilution. It's hard to measure out half a drop!

2.5% dilution – This is typically the dilution recommended for most adults. It is also commonly used for daily body care products and massage oils. For facial skin care, a 1% is better. Because half a drop is hard to measure, I usually round down this dilution to 2%.

3 – 10% dilution – Most often used for support during certain kinds of injuries or acute illness. The dilution ratio depends on the situation, the age of the individual, and the type of oil being used.

25% dilution – Used on rare occasions to soothe muscle cramps/spasms, bruising, etc.