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Essential Oils: Safe Use and Dilution

Dilution chart in drops, safety rules, diffuser use and storage

Essential oils are highly concentrated substances. A single drop corresponds to a large amount of plant material, which is why they are always diluted before applying to the skin. With this overview you will use them safely and economically.

Dilution chart

As a rule of thumb, **1 ml = 20 drops**. The actual drop size depends on the dropper and the thickness of the oil.

Dilution	Per 10 ml of carrier oil	Per 30 ml of carrier oil	When to use
0.5 %	1 drop	3 drops	sensitive skin, face, older people
1 %	2 drops	6 drops	face, everyday long-term use
2 %	4 drops	12 drops	body oils and massage for adults
3 %	6 drops	18 drops	short-term use on a small area
5 %	10 drops	30 drops	only short-term and locally

Suitable carrier oils include sweet almond, jojoba, apricot kernel, fractionated coconut or sunflower oil. Essential oils do not dissolve in water: for a bath, always mix them first with a tablespoon of carrier oil, cream or salt.

Safety rules

- **Dilute before use.** Apply essential oils to the skin only when diluted.
- **Patch test:** apply a small amount of the diluted blend to the inside of your forearm and watch for 24 hours for any redness or itching.
- **Do not swallow**, and do not put into the eyes, ears or nose.
- **Phototoxic oils:** cold-pressed bergamot, lemon, lime, grapefruit and bitter orange can cause irritation when applied to the skin and exposed to sunlight. After using them on the skin, avoid the sun and sunbeds for 12 hours.
- **Children:** do not use oils on the skin of children under 3 without consulting a professional. Do not use peppermint and eucalyptus on or near the face of young children.
- **Pregnancy, breastfeeding, epilepsy, asthma, taking medication:** consult a doctor before use.
- **Animals:** cats, birds and small rodents are sensitive to essential oils. Do not diffuse in a closed room the animal cannot leave, and do not apply oils to them.
- Keep out of the reach of children and follow the safety instructions on the label.

> If in eyes, rinse cautiously with water for several minutes. If swallowed, do not induce vomiting and contact a doctor or your local poison control centre. Keep the packaging or product label at hand.

Diffuser

Tank capacity	Number of drops
100 ml	3–5
200 ml	5–8
300 ml	8–10
500 ml	10–15

- Diffuse for 30–60 minutes, then take a break. Continuous running is not necessary.
- Air the room regularly. The scent should be gentle, not overpowering.
- Clean the diffuser once a week as per the manufacturer's instructions, otherwise oil residue clogs the membrane.

How to recognise a quality oil

- The label states the Latin name of the plant, the part of the plant used, the country of origin and the method of extraction (distillation, pressing).
- The product has a batch number and a best-before date.
- The oil comes in a dark glass bottle with a dropper.
- Beware of labels such as “fragrance oil” or “perfume oil”; these are usually not pure essential oils.

Storage

- Store bottles tightly closed, in a dark, cool place, ideally below 25 °C.
- Citrus oils oxidise fastest; once opened, use them up within about a year. Most other oils keep for 2–3 years.
- Do not apply oxidised oil (changed scent, thickened) to the skin.

This material is for information only and does not replace medical advice. Essential oils are not medicinal products. Always follow the safety instructions on the label of the specific product.
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