# Risks of Essential Oils

One of the biggest problems with essential oils is that most people think they are harmless. And it's true that for the most part, they are safe and effective. However, this is only if they are used correctly. The problem is, there are a lot of disagreements about what constitutes safe use of essential oils. Let’s delve into how you can be safe by looking at the risks of essential oils and who should avoid them.

**Photosensitivity**

If you are already very sensitive to the sun, there are some essential oils you should avoid when you’re going to be outdoors. They can make you more sensitive and causes sunburn. Some people who aren’t sensitive can also become sensitive using these essential oils. The oils to avoid are anything in the citrus family.

**Pregnancy and Nursing**

If you’re pregnant, you will want to check with your doctor before using any essential oils. The oils on record as being something you should avoid are wintergreen, sage, mugwort, tarragon, birch, aniseed, camphor, hyssop, parsley, pennyroyal, tansy, thuja, and wormwood. When nursing you may want to avoid peppermint oil as it can decrease your milk supply.

**Medication**

If you’re taking any medications, you will need to double check about any interactions with your meds. If you take a lot of meds, you may need just to skip using essential oils due to the problem with taking multiple things that interact with each other. A certified essential oil expert along with your physician can better help you make the decision.

**Children**

While a lot of people are proponents of using essential oils with their kids, the problem is they cannot be tested on children. Most experts suggest first talking to a doctor and then trying them extra diluted in a diffuser instead of applying directly on the skin. The oils that come from fruits are usually okay, but watch out for wintergreen, eucalyptus, rosemary or peppermint as they can affect breathing.

**Pets**

Again, many people do use essential oils with their pets. But don’t assume that anything you use for yourself can be used for them. One that is a big problem is tea tree oil, which can cause pets to have vomiting, tremors and other dangerous symptoms that can be life-threatening. It’s not worth it to even try.

Using essential oils is a good alternative for most people. However, for some - especially children, pregnant and nursing women, and animals – it may not be the safest choice despite the marketing claiming the contrary.

Do check with your doctor or veterinarian before you use anything on your children or pets. Just because it’s safe for you to use doesn’t mean that it’s safe for them. And just because something is natural doesn’t make it perfectly safe in all circumstances.