

## Advice following aromatherapy treatment

This leaflet is for women who have used aromatherapy during labour and birth.

- Aromatherapy is a relaxing and healing treatment so it is important to try to rest and relax afterwards. Take care if you are driving as your reflexes may be slower than normal.
- Aromatherapy massage is detoxifying and cleansing so it is important to drink plenty of water, herbal teas or fruit juices to aid this process.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and tobacco after aromatherapy treatments as their stimulating effects may hinder the detoxifying process.
- Try to take a light diet. Your body will be in a healing state and a heavy meal may make you feel nauseous.
- To gain the maximum benefit from the oils, avoid washing the skin where the essential oils have been applied for as long as possible (up to 4 hours).
- In the unlikely event of skin irritation, wash with warm water immediately and inform your midwife.
- Some essential oils are phototoxic and may cause skin irritation. Your midwife will advise you if the oils used in your treatment have this effect. If they have, avoid direct sunlight for 4-8 hours after treatment. This effect is enhanced in pregnancy and just after birth.
- Some people experience a headache and/or nausea following aromatherapy treatment. This is caused by your body detoxifying and should be relieved by drinking plenty of water.

### Finding out more

For more information about using aromatherapy in labour, please contact Laura Wallbank (Midwife/Aromatherapist by email [laura.wallbank@nhs.net](mailto:laura.wallbank@nhs.net) or Yvonne Bishop (Midwife with aromatherapy training) by email [Yvonne.Bishop@royalberkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:Yvonne.Bishop@royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.**

Written by: Laura Wallbank (midwife) Feb 2010  
Reviewed: May 2011, July 2013, November 2014, March 2018

Approved: Maternity Information Group & Patient Information Manager, May 2018

Review: May 2020