

Chapter Thirteen - Women's Health

Women have always played a central role in the care and nurturing of others. Caring for the sick was one of the most important domestic skills that was passed from one generation of women to the next. Caring for others seems to be an innate gift of femininity that can bless our lives and the lives of those around us.

It is our role as women to create new life and then to protect and bless those lives in every way that we can. It seems to come naturally to most women to put the needs of others first, even at the expense of their own health. There is much to be learned in the world of essential oils about service and honoring oneself, and the balance between the two. The fact is that a woman must care for herself if she is to have the strength and energy to give as much as she wants to the others that are so dear to her.

Many of the normal functions of a woman's body, such as menstruation and pregnancy, have been treated for too long as abnormal or just plain dirty/evil. This is changing in our time as more women learn about how their bodies and minds work, and take responsibility for their own physical and emotional health.

Nevertheless, and not withstanding that these are normal functions, being a caregiver can take a heavy toll on a woman's energy and general health. The bearing of and caring for children, while enormously rewarding, is an enormous task. The demands of our fast-paced society, in which many women juggle family life and a work schedule (either in or out of the home), while often times rewarding and exciting, only adds to the daily stress. As women, we sometimes add to our own stress with negative feelings about our physical selves and overemphasizing the importance of the outer self while ignoring our own inner beauty and wisdom.

Essential oils, like other aspects of natural health care, can make a significant difference in the lives of modern women and their families in caring for both emotional, spiritual, and physical needs.

Out of balance hormones can affect every aspect of a woman's existence. They affect her reserves of physical energy, general sense of well-being, emotional and spiritual state, efficiency and ability to concentrate, and even the kind of wife and mother that she will be.

PUBERTY—MOVING INTO WOMANHOOD

Adolescence is a time of great physical change as well as a period of intense intellectual and emotional development. The young woman is often struggling to find her own personal balance between independence and staying safely close to her support systems. She is trying to find a balance between her parent's advice, her own inner voice, and the clamor of her peer group.

Energetically, this is the cycle of Spring energy and a comparison with the "terrible twos" is not that far off the mark. Many of the same essential oils that are recommended on page 75 are appropriate here, with the addition of those that are specifically appropriate to hormone balance and the emerging attitudes and attributes of womanhood.

A balanced gallbladder and liver meridian system is essential here, but often, the diet of the teenage girl is far less than adequate to her needs. As an incentive to your teenage daughter to eat better, you might point out that a compromised gallbladder causes fats to accumulate in the bloodstream and in the tissues—usually exactly where they don't want extra fat.

The out-of-balance emotional aspects of this phase include the things that all parents dread—sudden swings from a delightful little girl to an angry, annoyed, rebellious, sassy, weepy, over-sensitive "almost woman".

RECOMMENDED ESSENTIAL OILS

EMOTIONAL

^{Le}Acknowledge, ^{Le}Angel, ^{Le}Believe, ^{Le}Letting Go, ^{Le}Millenia, ^{Le}Tranquility, ^{Le}Unity, ^{Le}Whispering Hope, orange sweet, sandalwood, vanilla

HORMONE

^{Le}EndoRelief and/or ^{Le}Woman Wise, frequently, on the feet in the area around the ankles or in the bath.

SKIN

Usually the result of poor diet and the widely fluctuating moods that result from hormones out of balance; clay foot soaks with an appropriate essential oil is usually very helpful.

ADDITIONAL OILS TO USE DURING THE PERIOD ITSELF OR AT VARIOUS TIMES THROUGHOUT THE MONTH:

^{Le}Baby Me, ^{Le}MyGraine, ylang ylang

These can be used around the ankles, areas of particular glands on both body and feet, lower back, abdomen, and along the spine.

Often women will tell me that they were happy and healthy as children, but have never really been well since puberty and the “kicking in” of their hormones. This is so sad. A proper diet and the use of essential oils and herbal remedies has changed this for many women.

Some artificial sweeteners inhibit the body’s production of estrogen which contributes to many of the hormone related problems of women today. There are also many hormones injected into and fed to the cattle and chickens that we eat and the cows which produce our milk supply.

MENSTRUATION

All things related to reproduction and birth are part of the Earth element/meridian phase. Many of the Earth’s natural processes are cyclical in nature. Our physical femininity is a reflection of our connection to “Mother Earth”. Menstruation is only one of these cycles in our lives. Our attitude towards ourselves as women and towards our monthly cycle has more of an effect on the comfort and ease with which we move through it than is often supposed.

The essential oils recommended in the next several sections for hormone imbalance related problems are often the same ones that are contra-indicated for pregnancy. The time should always be taken to study and ponder on the use of these oils during the child-bearing years.

AMENORRHEA

This is the absence of menstruation. Agents to assist are called emmenagogues.

RECOMMENDED EMMENAGOGUE ESSENTIAL OILS

^{Le}Woman Wise, basil, clary sage, hyssop, lavender, marjoram, rose, rosemary, sage

MENORRHAGIA

Abnormally heavy or extended menstrual flow. It may refer to irregular bleeding that occurs at odd times throughout the month. This is occasionally a sign of something serious, so if it doesn’t clear up quickly, consider the advice of a health care professional.

SUGGESTED ESSENTIAL OILS

^{Le}Millenia, chamomile Roman, cypress, geranium, bioplasma homeopathic, and cayenne tincture

DYSMENORRHEA

The term given to painful periods and the symptoms of PMS.

RECOMMENDED ESSENTIAL OILS

^{Le}EndoRelief, ^{Le}Woman Wise, chamomile Roman, clary sage followed by basil, cypress, jasmine, lavender, marjoram, peppermint, rosemary, sage, yarrow

DURING THE PERIOD

^{Le}Woman Wise and clary sage rubbed around the ankles or on the abdomen for balancing the hormones, and ^{Le}Deeper massaged into the abdomen or onto the back for pain and cramping.

SOME SYMPTOMS OF PMS AND SUGGESTED ESSENTIAL OILS

HEADACHE

^{Le}Letting Go, ^{Le}MyGraine, ^{Le}Woman Wise, clary sage

GENERAL ACHES AND PAINS AND BACKACHE

^{Le}Deeper, ^{Le}Paine

CONSTIPATION/DIARRHEA

^{Le}InsideOut

NAUSEA, VOMITING

^{Le}EZ Traveler, ^{Le}InsideOut, orange sweet

HYPOGLYCEMIA

^{Le}EndoRelief, ^{Le}Grateful Heart, ^{Le}Revitalize, ^{Le}WakeUp, anethi, dill, ylang ylang

TENSION, MOOD SWINGS, PANIC ATTACKS

^{Le}Beloved, ^{Le}HeartSong, ^{Le}Tranquility, ^{Le}Unity

PRE-CONCEPTION

A child's pattern of health begins with the egg and sperm that contain the genetic blueprint for the child's entire future. I wish that there was a way to impress upon every teenager that, for the sake of their future children, they cannot afford to damage their health with poor eating habits during these critical years.

The four months prior to conception are vital for the development of the both the sperm in the future father and the egg in the future mother that will eventually become a new person. Both ova and sperm can suffer from the effects of poor nutrition, toxic metals, environmental chemicals, viruses, and some drugs before conception has even taken place.

Most women who are pregnant don't realize it until they are six to eight weeks pregnant. Much of the crucial development of the baby's nerves, organs and bone structures has already taken place by this time. A nutritional deficiency that is causing little or no symptoms in the mother can be critical for the rapidly developing embryo.

Essential oils are highly concentrated plant material, and as such, contain a wide variety of nutrients which are absorbed into the body through the skin. The regular use of essential oils can help to fill nutritional needs and give a woman planning to conceive an additional margin of safety.

^{Le}Woman Wise and ^{Le}EndoRelief; the use of hormone balancing oils such as these can also make a major difference to the pregnancy and to the developing baby.

FERTILITY, INFERTILITY, AND CONCEPTION

Fertility requires good general health and well-balanced hormones in both the man and the woman.

RECOMMENDED ESSENTIAL OILS

^{Le}EndoRelief for general endocrine and glandular health

^{Le}Vitality for circulatory and vein health

^{Le}Woman Wise for hormone balance in the woman

^{Le}Balance for hormone balance in the man

MISCARRIAGE AND THE PREVENTION OF MISCARRIAGE

Miscarriage is far more common than is generally supposed. It is estimated that 1 in 2 very early pregnancies miscarry and appear to be only a delayed or extra heavy period. It is also estimated that 1 in 6 women who have a positive pregnancy test suffer a miscarriage. It is also estimated that with proper care and the use of natural remedies, over half of “threatened miscarriages” can be successfully brought to a full term.

Some women have spotting or even light periods regularly throughout their pregnancies. This does not necessarily indicate an impending miscarriage. However, at the first sign of bleeding, especially if it is accompanied by cramping or softening of the cervix, measures should be taken.

^{Le}Millenia to tighten the uterus and cervix, realign everything structurally and energetically; false unicorn and lobelia, not oils, but herbal remedies, taken in either tincture or capsule form. The ratio should be 3 parts false unicorn to 1 part lobelia. This combination taken as soon as spotting begins has saved many a pregnancy. The reason is a protective covering over the ovum called the corpus luteum which fails to dissolve promptly after fertilization. If it does not dissolve, the ovum is unable to implant in the uterine wall and the hormone changes that are triggered by the developing embryo fail to occur. The uterus empties and a miscarriage has occurred.

FOLLOWING A MISCARRIAGE

^{Le}Millenia causes the uterus to fold and return rapidly to a pre-pregnant state. This is the best way to deal with any excess bleeding. ^{Le}Millenia also helps the woman look forward and cope with the myriad of emotions that miscarriages create.

^{Le}HeartSong and ^{Le}Whispering Hope can also be helpful.

Return to a lifestyle that includes a good diet, moderate exercise, and an herbal/essential oil program for overall hormone balance.

PREGNANCY

Many of the blended essential oils listed below contain oils which, by themselves, are contra-indicated for pregnancy. Because they are part of a blend and the recommendations are for only a drop or two at a time, they are generally considered safe. Caution and common sense on your part are expected; if you feel that the oil is likely to or is causing any problem, however slight, quit using it immediately!

MINOR (AND NOT SO MINOR) AILMENTS OF PREGNANCY

The oils that may be needed during a pregnancy or during a labor and delivery are as individual as every mother. The ones listed below are personal favorites or ones that have worked well for several women in the past.

MORNING SICKNESS/ NAUSEA

Orange, sweet—place a drop behind each ear; put a few drops on a cotton ball in a small plastic bag, carry with you and sniff throughout the day. Peppermint—it is the aroma that helps, so place a few drops on a cotton ball much the same as directed with the orange oil above. Geranium—is for hormone balance and relaxation. Massage a few drops diluted with almond oil on the feet or place 2 - 3 drops in the tub and enjoy a quiet and relaxing bath. ^{Le}InsideOut—on the abdomen or feet; jasmine or rosewood—diffuse; wear on the body or sniff it as needed.

AMBIVALENCE OR NON-ACCEPTANCE OF THE PREGNANCY

^{Le}Acknowledge—acceptance and ability to connect with the developing child

^{Le}HeartSong—depression, lack of joy and anticipation

^{Le}Whispering Hope—particularly when feelings are deep despair, almost suicidal

FEAR SURROUNDING PREGNANCY OR DELIVERY

^{Le}Tomorrow —place on sternum or the wrists or diffuse

^{Le}Trust—as described above for ^{Le}Tomorrow

STRETCHED OR STRIATED ABDOMINAL WALL (AND ELSEWHERE) MUSCLES

^{Le}Baby Me—dilute with a carrier oil (vitamin E or something with jojoba, perhaps) and apply to the affected areas. Increase the nutritional value of the foods being eaten and supplement with a natural vitamin E (d-alpha tocopherol, not dl-alpha). Use mild abdominal exercises to strengthen the muscles. Be sure to follow a good exercise program when the pregnancy and recovery from the birth is complete.

STRETCH MARKS

^{Le}Baby Me—dilute with a carrier oil (vitamin E or something with jojoba, apricot, or avocado works well) and apply to the affected areas; increase the nutritional value of the foods being eaten and supplement with a good vitamin E.

ANEMIA

^{Le}Eternity or ^{Le}Millenia often helps the body uptake nutrients in a more efficient manner.

CONSTIPATION

Constipation is the natural consequence of hormones that relax the muscles (of which the intestine is one) so that the stretching that needs to be done can be accomplished. Solutions: always obey nature's urges immediately; drink lots of water; eat correctly to get proper nutrition for muscle and skin elasticity; use ^{Le}InsideOut applied to the abdominal area and the bottoms of the feet.

LEG CRAMPS

^{Le}WarmDown massaged into the calf muscles helps relieve these cramps. Leg cramps are often an indication of poor absorption of calcium. Poor calcium absorption is sometimes a factor in the prevalence of false labor contractions in the later stages of pregnancy.

SPIDER VEINS OR VARICOSE VEINS

Helichrysum—regenerates damaged tissue and dissolves clots and pooled blood

Cypress layered with helichrysum—to heal while improving circulation

^{Le}Vitality—to improve circulation

^{Le}WarmDown—dilute and massage into leg muscles to relieve pain and heavy sensation

^{Le}Visibility—specific for the small, spidery veins

When large, swollen veins are present, always massage above the vein and move upward.

XYPHOID PROCESS PAIN

The xiphoid process is the triangular bit of bone at the base of the sternum. Often the pressure of the full uterus pushing upward displaces this bone and causes varying degrees of pain.

^{Le}Baby Me—dilute and apply topically to the area

MISALIGNMENT OR MALPRESENTATION OF THE BABY

^{Le}Millenia—dilute and apply over the abdomen and back. This needs to be done in the final 3 weeks before term, but not during the labor itself. ^{Le}Millenia, during labor will keep the cervix from opening and even cause it to close to quite an extent.

TOXEMIA AND/OR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

^{Le}Vitality—if related to heart and circulation and there are high levels of protein in the urine; lavender, rose, ^{Le}HeartSong—for relaxation, stress and general fears.

This is a serious condition and can cause death or impairment in both mother and child if left unchecked. If the oils do not make a significant difference very quickly, seek professional help.

PRE-TERM LABOR

Lavender—for relaxation; clary sage—this one is also used post-term to get labor going, demonstrating natural remedy's ability to balance and return the system to a normal state

AVOIDING AN EPISIOTOMY OR TEAR

^{Le}Baby Me—massaged with olive, or vitamin E oil, onto the perineum in the weeks prior to delivery

LABOR AND DELIVERY

EARLY LABOR

The following 5 oils can be diluted and applied, usually to the ankle, the bottoms of the feet, or the abdomen. They may also be diffused or sniffed for a moment or two.

Clary sage—aids cervical dilation

Marjoram—relaxes muscles, easing the pain of contractions and allowing them to work more efficiently

Geranium—stimulates circulation, eases breathing, regulates pulse and blood pressure

Fennel—for pain relief

Nutmeg—supports adrenals & nervous system, helping with fatigue and blood sugar levels

The following six oils can be placed on the body but are most often diffused or sniffed by the mother. I usually prefer to have the woman smell an oil because sometimes an oil that is needed and smells good one minute is offensive, or even nauseating, a few minutes later when the need for it has passed.

Lavender—relaxes muscles and skeletal structure, takes the edge off pain

Jasmine—for lack of progress, stalling out of labor, emotional support

Rose—diffused at a birth can greatly improve everyone's emotions and confidence and ability to focus

Rosewood—for lack of progress, fear, or tension

Chamomile German—this oil is relaxing, uplifting, calming

^{Le}Wisdom—for the mother who seems to lack concentration and focus or seems to be concerned with and focused on things other than the labor and the coming baby

TRANSITION STAGE

^{Le}Whispering Hope, ^{Le}Unity—these oils are best just sniffed because this stage is usually short and something else will be needed in a moment or two

POST-PARTUM

RETAINED PLACENTA

Basil—rub on abdomen; angelica or jasmine—sniffed. Often the best thing to do is get the mother up and have her move around a little bit.

HEMORRHAGE

Ylang ylang, helichrysum—dilute and rub on the abdomen to cause the uterus to clamp down; geranium— aids contraction of uterus, pulls together stretched and dilated tissues, heals endometrium, constricts abdominal blood vessels

^{1c}Millenia—helps fold and firm the uterus, realign hips and pelvic structure. This one is amazing. Use only after the placenta has delivered, as it works very quickly and can close the cervix and prevent proper discharge of the placental tissue.

POST-PARTUM DEPRESSION (BABY BLUES)

^{1c}HeartSong, ^{1c}Tranquility, ^{1c}Trust, ^{1c}Unity, jasmine, geranium. These oils can be diluted and applied to the body, 2 or 3 drops placed in the tub for a relaxing bath, diffused or sniffed.

NURSING & BREAST CARE

Clary sage—to bring in milk

Fennel or basil—to increase milk supply. Caution: fennel should not be used for more than 1 or 2 days as it will excessively increase flow through the urinary tract.

Peppermint with cold compress—to decrease milk supply.

Chamomile German, ^{1c}Baby Me—sore or cracked nipples

Be sure to wash the breast thoroughly before nursing the baby whenever essential oils are applied.

BREAST INFECTIONS (MASTITIS)

Comes on swiftly and can be devastating to breast tissue; there is a really good herbal poultice that has proven itself many times. Use good herbals to fight the infection and help cope with the attendant fever, headache, and chills.

BABIES AND CHILDREN

When working with babies and children, always dilute especially well and use only a very small amount. More will not be better; often a small amount of an oil is soothing and calming but a larger amount will cause agitation and fussiness. Premature babies have such delicate and almost transparent skin, that it is best to avoid the use of essential oils until the skin has achieved more maturity.

Many of the blends mentioned here contain oils that are often considered too strong for babies and children. You must use these at your own risk, understanding that because they are blends there is not a high percentage of contra-indicated oils in them. If you choose to use them, please always dilute extremely well and use only a drop or two of the diluted mixture. Never apply an oil undiluted to an infant or small child and certainly keep your essential oils out of the reach of children!

COLIC

^{1c}InsideOut, ^{1c}Julia, ^{1c}Tranquility, bergamot, chamomile Roman, mandarin, rosemary, ylang ylang; dilute and apply to stomach and back

CONSTIPATION

Ginger, mandarin, orange sweet, or rosemary; dilute one of the oils and massage stomach and feet

CRADLE CAP

^{Le}Delicate—dilute with almond oil, apply to the head, after a few moments use a soft bristled brush to remove the crusts

DIAPER RASH

^{Le}Baby Me, 1 drop lavender and 1 drop chamomile Roman mixed with carrier oil

DRY SKIN

Rosewood or sandalwood, well diluted and applied

EARACHE

Chamomile Roman, lavender, tea tree, thyme, or garlic (Dilute all of them very well, especially the garlic as it can burn the ear if too strong or was not stirred thoroughly.) Place a diluted drop or two on a piece of cotton ball and place in the ear; rub a little bit of diluted oil behind the ear.

FEVER

Lavender—dilute with carrier oil and massage the baby—cover the back of neck, feet, behind the ears, etc. (The right homeopathic can also be very useful here.)

JAUNDICE

Geranium, lemon, lime, mandarin, or rosemary—dilute and apply on the liver area of the feet or on the baby's abdomen

TEETH GRINDING

Lavender, ^{Le}Tranquility—rub on feet or diffuse

The “Golden Years”

MENOPAUSE

^{Le}EndoRelief, ^{Le}Balance, angelica, cypress, orange sweet, chamomile Roman, rose, nutmeg, rosemary, sage—apply diluted oils to ankles, lower back and pelvis.

OSTEOPOROSIS

(Considered a disease related to calcium absorption; more properly understood as beginning with hormone imbalance—consider all the oils listed above for menopause.) ^{Le}WarmDown seems to aid calcium absorption; ^{Le}Deeper, ^{Le}Paine, ^{Le}Tranquility, birch, chamomile German, chamomile Roman, hyssop, lemon, nutmeg, pine, spruce, rosemary, wintergreen—dilute and use as a massage oil or put 2 - 3 drops in the tub; rub on feet.

BONE SPURS

^{Le}Aspire—using arnica oil as the carrier, massage into the area several times a day; will relieve the pain, and eventually, dissolve the spurs. At the same time, work should be done to improve the sources of calcium consumed and to improve the body's absorption of calcium.