

STEAM INHALATION

Herbal steams are used to deliver the medicinal qualities of herbs and essential oils directly to the respiratory tract. They hydrate, warm and decongest the mucus membranes of the nose, sinuses and throat. They can be used to help fight infection in these areas and the lungs, and are helpful in calming cough.

Option 1-Tent method

Boil 2-3 cups of water and **remove from heat**. Add 5-10 drops of essential oil (see suggested oils below). Position yourself so that your head is above the container of water, no closer than 9 inches. Drape a towel over your head and the container, forming a tent. Inhale the vapor with slow deep breaths for 5-10 minutes.

Option 2-Mug method

Fill a mug ½ full of boiling water.
Add 3-5 drops of essential oils.
Use hands to form a cup over nose and mug to enclose vapors. Inhale vapors for 3-5 minutes.

Option 3-Bath method

Draw a hot bath, keep door closed to keep the steam in. Add 10-15 drops of essential oil to bath and swirl to mix. Relax in tub for 15-30 minutes taking slow, full deep breaths.

Option 4-Modified bath method

Boil water, **remove from heat** and add essential oils to the pot as in option 1. Draw a hot bath as in Option 3. Carefully bring the pot of water into the bathroom and set near bath. Relax in the tub for 15-30 min. Take slow deep breaths.

Option 5-Vaporizer method

Using a steam vaporizer (not humidifier) add 5-10 drops of essential oil to the well of the machine (read the directions for your machine to locate the specific place for additions). Place your head near the steam vapors and inhale for 15 minutes. Another choice is to allow machine to run in your bedroom while you sleep.

Suggested Essential Oils

- Eucalyptus-general congestion, sinus infections
- Thyme-coughs, infections
- Lavender-calming and soothing
- Hyssop-coughs, infections
- Bitter orange-antibacterial, sedating
- Chamomile-coughs, colds, calming

Cautions

1. Do not use essential oils if you have known allergies to the essential oils or the plants from which they are derived.
2. Do not use essential oils if you have kidney disease.
3. Use essential oils with caution with people with epilepsy.
4. Do not use essential oils in pregnancy.
5. Prolonged inhalation of essential oils (several consecutive hours) of essential oils may cause headache, vertigo, nausea, lethargy, or double vision.