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Aromatic Wisdom Podcast Episode #005

6 Essential Oils for a Healthy Respiratory System

This is The Aromatic Wisdom Podcast, episode 5. Today I'll be talking about six unique essential oils that are very supportive of the respiratory system, and I'll be sharing some ways that you can use those oils to keep your throat, sinuses and lungs healthy and working well.

[*You're listening to the Aromatic Wisdom Podcast with your host, Liz Fulcher. If you're interested in learning about essential oils, hearing interviews with industry experts and discovering ways to grow your own aromatherapy business, this is the podcast for you. For more information and show notes, visit the website at aromaticwisdominstitute.com. Now, sit back, relax, take a deep breath and enjoy as Liz shares a dose of Aromatic Wisdom.*]

Hi everyone and thank you for joining me today – my name is Liz Fulcher and I'm your host on this podcast, and this is your first time tuning in to listen, welcome and thank you for being here! And if you have listened to other episodes and you've come back again, thank you so much – it means a lot of me, and in particular to know that people are finding value in what I'm sharing here.

So today's topic is the respiratory system, and if there's one thing that every aromatherapist worth their salt know is that essential oils have a powerful affinity with our respiratory system. When our respiratory system is compromised, whether it be through illness or allergies, you usually see 3 conditions. You'll see inflammation, there could be infection and there's usually a whole lot of stubborn mucus. So luckily, there are a

lot of amazing essential oils that really do have impact on these kinds of conditions within the lungs, throat and sinuses.

What I'm gonna focus on now is sharing with you how essential oils support the health of the respiratory system, but in particular when compromised by illness. The first thing I want to address is the best delivery method of essential oils for the respiratory system – and that is inhalation! The primary way to address this particular system in our body with essential oils is through inhaling the essential oils. And you can inhale them through a steam inhalation, when you take a pot of water, put essential oils in it and you're breathing in the steam. You can inhale the essential oils through diffusion, whether you use a cool mist diffuser or a ceramic diffuser and heat water – it doesn't matter what your method of diffusion is; if you're getting essential oils up into the air, you're breathing the molecules.

You can also be breathing the essential oils simply in a bath, through the steam that's rising through the water. You can also use a nasal inhaler – little tubes that are sold, wicks inside of them, you add the essential oil and you breathe from the inhaler through your nose. Steam inhalation, diffusion, bath, using a nasal inhaler – those are all ways that essential oils will be breathed in. The one thing that all of these methods of inhalation have in common is their benefit ,and the benefit is the essential oils molecules that you're breathing in come in direct contact with your nasal passages, your sinuses, your trachea, your lungs, the molecules have a direct interface with your mucus membranes.

There's also another reason to take inhalation seriously with children under 10, because there is direct contact with the molecules against the very delicate, very absorbent tissue of our respiratory system. So just what are the benefits of inhalation, of this contact, this physical contact between essential oils and these internal structures of a respiratory system? Well, I'll tell you – there are two very significant benefits. One is prevention, the other is treatment.

So let's take a look at what I mean by that. Alright – first of all, in terms of prevention, inhaling essential oils can often just smooth out prevent a respiratory infection. A sinus

infection, a sore throat, even bronchitis which is a kind of infection in the lungs. The whole respiratory system is often a first avenue of infection and it's kind of where everything begins and it just blows up from there. Essential oils can intercept and stop the microorganisms from doing their distortedly deeds.

This business of using essential oils for prevention is huge. And it's remarkable when you think that essential oils can actually be used to protect you from even getting sick in the first place. Another benefit of the physical contact between essential oils and the respiratory system is that they can actually treat respiratory conditions. So inhalation has a direct effect on infection within the respiratory system, it has a direct effect on congestion and essential oils can even cross the mucus membranes of the respiratory system and get right into your bloodstream.

Let's just take a second to talk about mucus membranes. Just what exactly is a mucus membrane? It's tissue – we have tissue on the external part of our body; it's our skin. But then on the inside of our body we have another kind of tissue that's called mucus membrane and mucus membrane lines cavities within our body, specifically cavities that are exposed to the external environment, and the internal organs, which is pretty much what you can say about your throat, your lungs and your sinuses, that are those parts of our body that are exposed to both the external environment and the internal organs. This tissue, this mucus membrane has two really important jobs: absorption and secretion. So if you wanted to have truly a firsthand experience of a mucus membrane, just stick your finger in your mouth. If you run your index finger along the inside of your cheek, you'll feel that familiar smooth, slimy, absorbent tissue that lies inside of your mouth. That is mucus membrane.

I just covered inhalation and the benefits of inhalation. So now I want to talk about properties. What are the properties that we want from essential oils when we're actually dealing with this wonderful respiratory system? Okay, so I'm going to give you a list of the properties, and then I'll break each one down and explain what they mean. We would like essential oils to be decongestant, expectorant, mucolytic, antitussive, anti-infection,

antibacterial and anti-inflammatory. So here's what each of those properties means. Let's start with decongestant: when an essential oil is stated to have the properties of being decongestant, it's actually implied that it's a nasal decongestant – those essential oils will help reduce nasal production. No, not nasal production – we don't make noses. Will help reduce nasal mucus production and swelling. In particular the sinuses – so if you have sinus issues, whether it be discomfort from allergies and you actually have a cold, you really want to look for essential oils that have these decongestive properties.

Okay, the next important property that we want from our respiratory supporting oils is expectorant. An expectorant is everything that helps to bring up mucus and anything else from the lungs, the bronchi, the trachea – it just basically helps promote the discharge of phlegm. And when you have, particularly in your lungs, when you have a lot of phlegm built up in there, you feel like you're suffocating. You really want to be able to get that out, so that you can breathe and also to help clear the way that essential oils can get in there and do their job.

Mucolytic is our next term and there's an interesting word! When an essential oil has the property of being mucolytic, it helps to clear the mucus from your airwaves. Mucus secretions really aren't supposed to be thick. In a healthy body, you secrete mucus that is generally clear and thin, and it helps to remove things from lungs. When it's thick, it's a response to something inside the body. And it gets more viscous and thicker when you have too much secretions, like when you're sick. It also has a tendency to want to really stick to the surface, to the mucus membranes. So you got this thick mucus, you've got it stuck to the inside of your lungs and your sinuses, and so you need something to start to thin the thickness and to break it up, so that you can expectorate it. And that's what a mucolytic does – it helps to thin, it helps to actually break up the thick and stubborn mucus that is clogging up your system.

Okay, the next property on our list is antitussive. If you speak one of the romantic, Latin-based languages like French, Italian or Spanish, the word 'antitussive' would probably not be too much of a stretch for you to understand what it means. The Latin word 'tusir' means

'to cough'. So if something is tussive, it creates coughing; so if something is antitussive, it suppresses cough. So if you think about the commercial products that we don't want to use like Robitussin, that is a product that's on the market for coughing. Well, we do not need those products because we have antitussive properties in essential oils. And antitussive means it helps to suppress a cough.

Coughing is good, I mean it helps to get stuff out of the bronchial tubes. That's the whole reason that exists. But it can be really annoying when you can't get rest, you're sitting at work - you know, if you're in a situation you just can't afford to keep coughing, you're definitely going to want essential oils with antitussive properties.

Anti-infectious is pretty straightforward. It helps the body resist infection. And the same thing with the antibacterial, means that there are properties in the essential oil that are destructive to bacteria, and finally – anti-inflammatory. That's a classic healing property of essential oils; helps reduce and alleviate inflammation. So there you have the list of essential oil properties that you want to look for when you are addressing the respiratory system; whether it is to protect it, or whether you would like to use essential oils to address a condition that's already existing in the body and resolve it.

So, I'd be willing to bet that there's at least one person out there, listening, who's starting to get fidgety, saying 'When are you going to get to the 6 oils already, Liz?' I'm getting there. But first, I have to explain how I found the 6 oils. So if you know: Okay, I know what properties I want; I want to decongest the mucolytic expectorant and so forth – how am I going to find out which are the oils that have those properties?' So you can go to Google and you can get a list of 27 different oils from lots of different people's opinions, but there's an easier way. I recommend turning to chemistry. Now, don't get scared – if you're unfamiliar with essential oil chemistry, calm down, this isn't going to be a chemistry lesson.

Whenever I share and teach about the therapeutic and clinical aspects of essential oils, everything I share is grounded in science and research. With regard to choosing the essential oils that give us the best results for the respiratory system, you need to know 3

things about essential oil chemistry that will help you understand what I'm sharing in this podcast. So here are the 3 things I want you know about essential oil chemistry:

#1. Every essential oil is made up of molecules.

#2. These molecules give the oil its specific activity. Molecules will determine if it's calming, if it's anti-inflammatory, if it's decongestant, if it's mucolytic and so forth.

#3. These molecules are grouped into chemical families, based on similarities of their actions.

I'm not going to embellish any more than that on the chemistry. Those are 3 very simple foundational points about essential oil chemistry that I want you to understand so that the next bit of information I'm going to share makes a little bit more sense. In aromatherapy, there are 10 chemical families. Now, remember, families all have similarity of action, so all the essential oils within one family have similarities of action. I'm going to talk to you about two of those chemical families, and then I will share 3 oils from each family. The two families that are our great allies for respiratory conditions are: ketones and oxides. And why these?

Because they are fabulous for all those hallmarks of respiratory illness that we've discussed earlier. Inflammation, infection, mucus – ketones, oxides will address all of those things for respiratory distress. So the first family is ketones. Essential oils high in ketone molecules are strong mucolytic and they have great expectorant action. So they help dissolve the mucus and get it out. Essential oils high in oxides, there's one molecule in particular in the oxide family that is a rock star, and that's 1,8cineole. You'll see it written as 1,8cineole. Essential oils high in this oxide molecule are great for decongesting. They have antitussive properties – there's that $10 word again, so they're going to help decrease coughing. And they also help with expectoration. With getting the mucus out.

The other nice thing about these two families, the families of ketones and oxides, is that they're big. Which means that you have a lot of essential oils to choose from within each

family. You don't have to keep using the same oil over and over again. I also like working with a big family because you get a layering effect; you can use two or three different oils from one family in different ways. So you can use one in an inhaler and take another in the bath. Or you can use one in a massage and you can use the other in a steam inhalation. So you have a lot of options – you don't have to worry about sensitization, and sometimes you might respond better to one oil than the other.

My 3 favorite ketone essential oils are spike lavender, rosemary chemo type 1,8cineole, and eucalyptus dives. I will put the Latin names of each of the oil names in the show notes so you know exactly which one I'm talking about. Spike lavender, which is called 'lavandula latifolia' is my very favorite. I love spike lavender – it smells good, it's lavender with a kick because it has a ketone molecule in it called camphor. Spiked lavender is a great friend to the respiratory system. It's also really good for pain, for inflammation and for headaches. So spike lavender is my go-to oil for sinus headaches. What makes this lavender different from true lavender would be this one molecule – this ketone which makes it very warming, it gives it its mucolytic properties, but because it's still a lavender, you've got the calming effect and, you know, you've got the antispasmodic action as well. So that was my first oil in the ketone family.

The second essential oil in the ketone family is rosemary. And there are two types of rosemary that work really well for the respiratory system: rosemary chemo type camphor and rosemary chemo type 11,8cineole. Usually, when you have a lot of cineole you have a lot of camphor, and vice versa. Either one of those you get will be great for the respiratory system. This oil is awesome – it's head-opening, it's decongestant, it's also good for muscle pain and is very warming, so if you have all sorts aches from like a cold or a flu, rosemary in a massage oil – very effective against pain and the chills of the flu. I like using rosemary in a cream for respiration issue. I like to just rub it in my chest, my upper back, all day. You can also do that in an oil that's a little heavier, and in the winter time, that might even be appropriate. It's a very effective essential oil against excessive mucus.

And speaking of mucus, my third oil in the ketone family is eucalyptus dives. This oil is spectacular at reducing mucus. I mean that real, thick, stuck mucus that clogs you up? Eucalyptus dives in a steam inhalation is super. It is cooling – the other two, spike lavender and rosemary are warming oils. This one's a little cooler, so this would be great in a steam inhalation. I'd be more inclined to use this like in an inhaler. You can also use it in a chest rub or a cream or an oil – it smells awesome. And, of course, you can do a layering effect with these 3 oils – spike lavender, rosemary and eucalyptus dives.

Before I move into the 3 oxide essential oils, I want to say a word about ketones and safety. When you're using a ketone-rich oil, try to keep your dilution low. They have some pretty powerful molecules, in particular camphor – so the simple rule is to keep your blends at 1% dilution. Whether it be for an adult – normally I'd give you a 1-3% range; I'd say keep it at 1% for everyone. I will put in the show notes the blending dilution ratios. 5 to 6 drops in one ounce is a 1% dilution.

Now, let's move into the 3 oxide oils. So the oxide essential oils are really easy to recognize, because they smell like halls – they have that camphoratious, eucalyptus kind of smell and here are my three favorite oxide-rich essential oils. The first is an exquisite oil that's kind of new to me. And not new to me in knowledge – new to me in experience. It's called 'Rosalina'. I've known about Rosalina for years – but recently started using it in classroom and I've started using it in my own life quite a bit and I've really fallen in love with it. It has that camphoratiousy kind of quality that all the oxide-rich oils have, but it's softer and it's more floral. I purchased Rosalina from a company here in Pennsylvania and it's called Pompeii Organics. The website is PompeiiOrganics.com. I'll put that in the show notes and I want to read what the owner, Jessica Grill, wrote on her website about Rosalina oil.

She writes:

"I fell in love with Rosalina the second I smelled it for the first time. It has so much to offer because of being so skin-friendly, with a lot of linalool and having gentle respiratory

benefits with minimal oxide content compared to eucalyptus globulus. The smell is a sweet combination of lavender and eucalyptus, with a woodsy and buttery note that's difficult to explain. It simply smells beautiful".

And then Jess also put a recipe on her website, and I will – again, I will give you the link to her website in the show notes. It's a recipe that she invented, called 'Respiratory chest butter' and it has shea butter and Rosalina and ravintsara and cedar wood. Jess has a 4 year-old daughter that gets seasonal allergies and when she starts to drain, and when her nose start to drain in the back of her throat, she gets a coughing fit. Jess created this blend and has been rubbing it into her daughter's chest every day for the past week and has said that it has been absolutely incredible in reducing her daughter's cough and making her feel better. Another really nice property of Rosalina essential oil is that it can help you sleep. So on top of helping you get over your cold, and flu and allergy discomforts, it will also help you rest so that you can actually restore and heal.

Okay, the next essential oil that I've chosen in the oxide family is called ravintsara. Not ravensara. That is a different oil. Ravintsara is sometimes also called ho leaf. The Latin binomial is a mouthful 'Cinnamomum camphora', chemo type 1,8cineole. But that is what you want to look for if you want to make sure to get this specific oil and not ravensara. I'll put that in the show notes. So ravintsara is a really powerful anti-infectious oil. Comes from Madagascar and again, like the others, you just have to sniff it to understand this is wonderful for the respiratory system. You can smell the 1,8cineole molecule in it. It's really penetrating. So this is a good one for head congestion, it's also expectorant. This is a great one for sinus infections, I love it in a steam inhalation. I'll put a drop of tea tree, a drop of ravintsara, I might put or a drop of Rosalina and a drop of ravintsara. It also has a very nice aroma. It's very reminiscent of tea tree. This is another good one for headaches, like sinus headaches. This ravintsara is really an excellent oil for long-term healing of chronic allergies, so if you need to do a regular protocol to keep your allergies under control, ravintsara is good for that.

So is the next oil: probably one of my favorite of all the oils, let alone the oxides. The third oil in the oxide list is called laurel leaf. It's also known as bay laurel. Again, you want to look for laurus nobelus to make sure you have the correct oil. And I picked laurel leaf for two reasons: no.1 – I adore it. I love the way it smells. I just love the aroma, when I smell it I want to eat it. Bay leaves are used in cooking. It has a very spicy smell, but again you can pick up that sharp camphorociousness that you have in the other oxide oils. It's a really good oil to help alleviate cold and allergy symptoms. Just the sneezing, the stuffy head, the general congestion. I love to diffuse this one, partly because I really enjoy the way it smells. So if you have to diffuse an oil or if you're choosing which one to diffuse, I recommend laurel leaf just because it smells so good. Put a couple drops of orange in with it, it smells great.

Those are my 6 oils. To recap: the three oils from the ketone family were spiky lavender, rosemary chemo type 1,8cineole and eucalyptus dives. The 3 oils from the oxide-rich family were: Rosalina, laurel leaf and ravintsara. And again – to recap. The best method of application of the essential oils for the respiratory system is through respiration, whether it's a diffuser, a bath, a steam inhalation, a nasal inhaler – getting them into your sinus passages, into your throat, into your lungs through inhalation is hands-down the best way to address problems of the respiratory system. That is it for the main body for today's podcast. I hope that this has been really helpful. As always, you can ask me questions about anything that I share with you. Write to me: liz@aromaticwisdom.com. You can also pop into Facebook and ask me questions: facebook.com/aromaticwisdominstitute. And of course, you can always come to school and learn more with me as your teacher.

And finally, I like to end every podcast episode with a segment I call 'Smell my life'. In this segment, I like to share some authentic aromatic moment from my life in the previous week. And this past week, my grandson whom I call Bean is 7 years-old had some kind of minor oral surgery, but he was very nervous about going to the dentist for the first time. He knew he'd be in the chair for a while, and in fact, he sat there for 2 hours. His mom and dad were with him, and my son has prepared an inhaler for him. I was so proud! And with lavender essential oil and I believe there was a drop of neuroli in there as well. And my

grandson sniffed the essential oil through the inhaler during the procedure and the coolest thing was that this dentist saw the inhaler and said to my son: Oh, I have a diffuser. If you'd like I can turn that on and put lavender essential oil in the diffuser during my grandson's procedure. How stinking cool was that?

And that wraps it up for episode 5 of the Aromatic Wisdom podcast. Thank you very much for hanging in there with me. You've got some resources now to keep yourselves strong and healthy in your lungs, in your throat and your sinuses – please go ahead, use them. If you have questions, let me know. I will see you next Thursday. Have a beautiful week!

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