

# Essential Oils & Cats

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## What are essential oils?

They may seem virtually harmless being that they are extracted from plants, but essential oils might not be so innocent. Although there is not a lot of information on these oils and their effects on humans or animals, there is a bit of research that suggests we should beware. When evaporated, these oils become small droplets in the air that can land in the environment, on your pet, or even be inhaled. These oils can then have harmful effects in your pet's airways, skin, or even their oral cavity if licked off their fur or from the environment. The effects induced by these oils may be similar to an allergic reaction, where the immune system overreacts to the exposure leading to unfortunate clinical signs, or more severe affecting internal organs.

### For more information:

\*CVMA Position Statement -  
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/documents/cats-and-essential-oils>

Pet Poison Helpline -  
<http://48qbc13dv397vzass1ql291.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2017-Essential-Oils-and-Cats-Handout.pdf>

## Why are we worried about cats?

As many know, the liver is a very important organ that works in detoxifying harmful substances that our bodies may come into contact with. There are several processes that take place within our livers that allow this detoxification to take place. One of these processes is known as glucuronidation, which is a fancy way of saying that the liver joins a certain substrate, known as glucuronide, to harmful substances to essentially deactivate or detoxify them. This is one of the main processes for detoxification in many species, but unfortunately cats' livers are not able to carry out glucuronidation which is why they are much more susceptible to certain compounds' effects, like aspirin and essential oils, which use this process to become less harmful to the body.

### \*Oils identified to be of concern:

- Bergamot
- Bitter almond
- Calamus
- Cinnamon
- Clary sage
- Clove
- Eucalyptus
- European pennyroyal
- Geranium oil
- Horseradish
- Japanese yew
- Lavender
- Lemon oil
- Lemongrass
- Lime oils
- Mustard
- Orange oils
- Oregano
- Pennyroyal
- Pine
- Spruce
- Juniper
- Rose
- Rosemary
- Sandalwood
- Sassafras
- Tea tree
- Thyme
- Wintergreen
- Peppermint
- Spearmint
- Mint
- Wormseed
- Ylang ylang

