

In this newsletter we will try to help you further your knowledge and use of essential oils.

Physical ailment

Eczema - Atopic Dermatitis

by Penny Keay

This past month we have had several inquires about eczema. It is not just in the winter that people are afflicted with this condition, it's just that it appears to get worse this time of year.

So what is eczema and what causes it? Eczema is a type of dermatitis. Dermatitis is inflammation or irritation of the skin. Eczema can appear in two main forms. The dry form where the skin cracks and flakes or a weepy kind where blisters form, then continue to ooze. The cause can be from many things but often the underlying cause is due to an allergy to something. Something you came in contact with or something you ate or inhaled. Most often it is diet related and can be hereditary.

Most common sites for eczema to start are on the face, in the bends of the elbows and behind the knees, although it can be found on any part of the body. It can be extremely itchy, red, raw, weepy or dry, crusty and flaky. It can be any of the above. Often it will start as small blisters that quickly will break, ooze then become crusty and flaky. The area affected can be as little as a small coin shaped circle or cover a large portion of your body.

Many of you that have known Al and me for a while know that he has eczema also. He had suffered for years with it appearing just in the winter months and of all places on his eyelids. Then about 5 years ago he had a major outbreak and it covered nearly his entire body. Surprisingly it was from his neck down. He was miserable. It was extremely itchy and he was getting to the point where he was unable to sleep at night and was causing self-mutilation of his legs while sleeping (yes he scratched until he bled). The doctor put him on a course of steroids and on cortisone cream. It got worse!!

One afternoon he was eating some nuts and cheese and within an hour or so noticed he was very itchy. He put two and two together and discovered he must have an allergy to something he was eating. So he called the doctor again and explained that it was getting worse, not better and he thought it was food related. She recommended allergy testing for food allergies. So, we took the plunge and even

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though our health insurance wouldn't cover the cost of the tests the \$500.00 we spent was well worth it.

He was allergic to Corn! And about a dozen more foods at varying levels. Corn was and is still the worse offender. He must avoid all corn and corn by products or else he develops blisters between his fingers, behind his knees and on his eyelids!

The doctor explained that in allergies of this type that cause eczema the allergen is actually causing the skin to boil from within - hence the blisters, they break open to let the toxin out but in so doing have caused skin damage. The skin in a flare up may feel hot or warm to the touch. This in turn may cause it to itch.

The skin will attempt to heal but because the offending food may still be being ingested or the substance exposed to may still be present the skin has a very hard time to heal partly because you may be itching it or the blisters keep forming, breaking and oozing in the underlying skin layers.

This is where aromatherapy can help. If you can keep a barrier by applying lotions and creams that have essential oils and other carrier oils between your skin and the outdoor elements you should be able to shorten the length of time it takes for your skin to heal. Also the faster you can get it to heal the less likely you are of developing secondary infections such as bacterial or fungal infections. Several essential oils will help relieve itching.

Some of the best essential oils for eczema are Rose otto, Lavender, Roman Chamomile, Neroli, Helichrysum, Bergamot and the carrier oils Evening Primrose oil and Rosehip seed oil. Evening Primrose oil is extremely helpful for those with eczema and should be used and/or mixed in small amounts in any lotion or cream used for your skin.

Other essential oils that may help are Geranium, hyssop, juniper berry, Melissa, German Chamomile, Carrotseed, cedarwood, niaouli, rosemary, rosewood, tea tree, oregano, clary sage, patchouli, ylang ylang and sandalwood.

Many of the essential oils listed can help with stress which can also be a triggering factor in eczema. Removing stress in your life can help along with getting plenty of fresh water and rest.

Al found a special blend that I made up for him worked wonders. It helped keep the skin softened so it did not seem to crack as easily. It provides essential oils that

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helped the skin to heal fast and prevent infections. To buy this blend please visit our websites Scented Products page.

Another helpful blend would be to use our Sorbolene Cream, to that add some evening primrose oil and a few drops of Roman Chamomile.

Our recommendation to anyone suffering from eczema, especially if it is long term is to see your doctor first. If you suspect you have food or other allergies you may want to inquire about testing (for Al it was simply drawing a few tubes of blood that were sent off to a special testing lab).

Remember prevention is still the best medicine. If you find out you are allergic to some food you are eating it's much easier to avoid that food than to deal with the eczema.

Al also found that since the eczema always was worse in the winter time, we discovered that as soon as he got more sunshine on his skin it would disappear.

For Al and many other eczema sufferers it is known that they may need more sunshine to help their body with the photo-chemical reactions he needs to make certain hormones and vitamins to keep his skin healthy. Note: there are a few individuals that have the opposite reaction to the sun and must avoid it. These folks a few and far between but thought I should mention it here too.

So in the winter months he goes to the tanning booth for one 20 minute session each week. This has all but eliminated his eczema unless of course, he gets into some corn by product by accident (happens sometimes when we eat out and aren't sure what might be in the food ingredient lists).

He uses my cream all winter long too as his skin does have a tendency to dry out more than mine.

We hope this information has been helpful and you can find some relief for your eczema too.

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March 6, 2007

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Emotional Concern

Mental Fatigue - slow my mind down please!

by Penny Keay

There can be many causes of Mental Fatigue. Typically it will first be triggered by physical stress and fatigue. Pretty soon you are unable to concentrate and your mind wanders. You cannot or are unable to focus on your project or job. You begin to feel depressed and are tired much of the time. Falling asleep is difficult. Even though you cannot focus your mind won't shut down when it is time to rest.

Using essential oils to help stimulate your concentration and memory are most helpful at this time. Several essential oils may give you a little physical and mental pick me up too.

Some of the best essential oils for mental fatigue are Basil, Rosemary, and Peppermint. Any stimulating essential oil will be helpful but should not be overused. The best treatment for mental fatigue is to try to get physical rest. Essential oils that are relaxing and calming are best used to help you fall asleep and get the real rest you need.

Try this stimulating blend as adapted from Roberta Wilson's book [A Complete Guide to Understanding & Using Aromatherapy for Vibrant Health & Beauty](#).

Rosemary - 3 drops
Basil - 2 drops
Juniper berry 1 drop
Peppermint - 1 drop

Blend well in an amber bottle then use a few drops in the shower or put in a personal nasal inhaler and inhale as needed.

Essential oils to help with mental fatigue include basil, cardamom, peppermint, clary sage, grapefruit, coriander, Eucalyptus, ginger, Helichrysum, Jasmine, Juniper, orange, palmarosa, thyme, Vetiver, ylang ylang, rosemary, lavender, neroli, petitgrain, lemon,

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Health and Beauty

Soft and Smooth Lips

by Penny Keay

Nothing is nicer to kiss or see as a smile than nice soft, smooth lips. Wintertime air or any time weather can leave our lips cracked, sore and dry.

Prevention is definitely a must to keep your lips soft. Something very simple is to apply a little bit of jojoba regularly to your lips.

To make this more readily available than carrying a large bottle of jojoba simple put some jojoba in one of our roll-on perfume bottles. These bottles are very versatile with the roller.

They are easily filled with jojoba and you can add just a drop or two of peppermint, spearmint or any of the citrus oils. Although if you are going to be outdoors you should avoid using any citrus oils as they can cause a photo-sensitive reaction.

If your lips have become chapped you might want to add one or two of the following essential oils to your jojoba. Roman or German Chamomile, Rose, Sandalwood, Neroli or Eucalyptus. Remember only add a drop or two per 10ml of jojoba.

Of course, you will need to try to not lick your lips too.

Before I forget, chapped dry lips are often a sign that you need to get a drink of water. You are probably dehydrated and don't realize it. I always get chapped lips when we are out for a day of shopping because I forget to take a bottle of water along with me!!

If you want to make a protective lip gloss you can make a simple gloss using beeswax pearls - 1 tablespoon and 1 tablespoon sweet almond oil. Melt and stir these together in a hot water bath. Do not heat these over direct heat or flame.

Once the beeswax has melted add the sweet almond oil and add 5-10 drops of jojoba, 3 drops of Carrotseed oil and upto 6 drops total of 2-3 different essential oils. Good oils for this recipe are listed above. Remember only 6 drops total. Pour into a small jar and let cool. Use as needed on your lips.

You can use the above base gloss, plain too without any essential oils added.

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Around the House and Garden Freshen Closets and Wardrobes

by Penny Keay

This time of year the closets and dressers start to take on new odors of their own. Some may not be as pleasant as we would like.

Of course, you see the commercial where they are spraying some odor beater to eliminate the odors. Well, if you read the label closely on that product and have allergies to corn you will need to avoid it as it has corn based ingredients and of course some other unnatural stuff too.

Personally, using essential oils is natural and a much more pleasant way to deal with odors. There are many great essential oils you can use.

Lavender is probably the most favorite of everyone. But if you like the smell of cedar chests and closets and don't have one, simply place several drops of cedarwood on a terra cotta disc or other passive type diffuser.

The simplest form of a diffuser for a closet is to place several drops on a cotton ball and pin it to a hanger.

The Terra Cotta Pendants work great for hanging in closets. You can use them as jewelry as they were meant to be used but they can also be used as a decorative diffuser to hang in your closet or wardrobe.

Although you can use any single oil in the closet you probably would be happier with a blend that has a base note oil as part of the blend. Base notes are known to have lasting power especially when mixed with your lighter oils. The lighter oils will also last longer.

Some of the better known base notes are cedarwood, patchouli, sandalwood, frankincense, vetiver. Simply mix your other essential oils with one or more of these then drop onto your passive diffuser. Let it soak in and place in your closet.

It should last a couple weeks or so but that depends on the size of your closet, how often you are in and out of it and the temperatures where you live.

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Experimenting here is fun. You can try different combinations and find the ones you enjoy the most.

If you have a moth problem you'll want to use essential oils to keep those little pests out of the closet. Other oils to try include: Lavender, Geranium, Eucalyptus globulus, Eucalyptus Lemon, Cajeput, Clove bud, Bay laurel, Peppermint, Patchouli, Pine needle, Sandalwood, Citronella and Lemongrass.

Please note: these essential oils will not kill any of the pests, just repel them. If you desire to actually destroy these pests, you should call an exterminator.

Have fun and I know you'll have the best smelling closets, wardrobes and dressers than anyone in your neighborhood!!!

Recipes to try

by Penny Keay

Cool Compress for Eczema

Roman Chamomile – 3 drops
Lavender - 3 drops
Rose otto – 1 drop
Neroli – 1 drop

Mix all essential oils together. Then add 1-3 drops in a small basin of water. If the body part affected is a small area, submerge in water. If not, use a soft cloth, wet it, wring it out and apply to the area. Since eczema affected skin is often very warm to the touch this should give some relief.

Mental Fatigue Diffuser Blend

Grapefruit – 5 drops
Peppermint – 3 drops
Rosemary – 3 drops

Mix in an amber bottle, then put several drops on a pad of a Fan diffuser. Can also be mixed with 4 ounces of distilled water and used as a room spray as needed.

Another Mental Fatigue Diffuser or Nasal Inhaler Blend

Basil – 15 drops
Lemon – 15 drops
Rosemary – 15 drops

Mix in an amber bottle, then put several drops on a pad of a Fan diffuser. Or place several drops in a nasal inhaler and inhale as needed.

Citrus-Mint Body Splash

Orange – 10 drops
Mandarin – 10 drops
Lemon – 6 drops
Grapefruit – 6 drops
Peppermint – 5 drops

Blend the essential oils together in an amber bottle. Next in an 8 ounce PET bottle put 2 ml of emulsifier then add the essential oils. Mix (shake) very well. Then add 2 ounces of white vinegar and again shake very well. Then fill the rest of the bottle with distilled water. Shake well before

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use. Splash this on after your shower. It is very invigorating and should help energize you throughout your day!

BIRCH HILL HAPPENINGS NEWS

Hello Everyone,

ROARRRRRR! March has come in like a lion here in Minnesota!!

We had our first 'Blizzard' in over 15 years - at least here where we live.

The other big storms we have had were in 1991 and the biggest storm ever was the year that Al and I were married in 1975! Yep, we got married in a Blizzard - well, not really but we almost did. The storm hit the Sunday (Palm Sunday) and lasted almost all week- dumping nearly 30 inches of snow on us.

It finally quit on Friday, March 28, 1975. We managed to get dug out and our Wedding went on as it was suppose to on March 29th. Even all of our attendants made it and some of them had to travel over 200 miles along very snow covered highways.

So, you can see our Anniversary is coming up very soon and mark your calendars as we will be taking a long weekend getaway to celebrate 32 years of marriage the last weekend of March. You all know Al and I are romantics so need I say more? Orders placed during our long weekend will be shipped upon our return. It will be noted on your order sheet at the time you place your order.

So what's new this month? Did you remember to check out our 'What's New" page throughout the last few weeks? If not make sure you do check in there.

We will periodically put up new items or have reduced or clearance items so you'll want to check that page too. It is linked from our main page, and our online catalog page.

To start with we have available once again Penny's "Cream de la Crème". It is a wonderful hand and body cream for extremely dry, cracked, chapped hands such as those seen with folks suffering from eczema. So you'll want to click on the link for this wonderful cream. It will be found on the Scented Products page with the Lavender Sachets.

Also, we have added Bees Wax Pearls to our Carrier oil page. Although they are not true carrier oil, they are used in many recipes for hand, skin and lip care. Many of you have inquired if we carried them. We have them available in small quantities as

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many recipes only call for 1-2 tablespoons at a time. These are all natural beeswax in easy to use pearls. They are light yellow in color - their natural state. (We do not carry the white beeswax as they are bleached and could contain residues of the bleaching agents that are used to make them white.)

We have new empty Green colored PET bottles being offered in 2, 4 and 8oz sizes. Also we have recently reduced the pricing of the SpaScenters, their pads and the SpaScenter Sets. So if you have been waiting for a great deal on this very popular variable speed fan diffuser you may want to get one soon.

Lastly we have several candles on clearance. Our supplier of candle jars recently discontinued the two styles we had for an uncovered cobalt blue and square green glass. We now have a covered style cobalt blue jar. Anyway, we have priced the old style jars upto 50% off so we can make space for our new jars. The candles are still made out of our pure essential oils and soy wax. So you'll want to hurry as supplies are limited and will probably go rather quickly. We'll try to keep the number count current on the webpage, but realize if you order and we are out we will ship what we have available.

Well, that's it for this time. If you have suggestions, questions or comments please feel free to send us an e-mail to bhinfo@birchhillhappenings.com and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Yours in Aromatherapy,

Penny & Al

Be sure to visit us on line at

<http://birchhillhappenings.com/aroma1.htm>

for all your Essential oils and Aromatherapy Supplies needs.

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