



Crow River
Animal Hospital
& Dental Clinic

Friday Fun Facts – Number 2:2009
Melissa Shelton DVM

Using Essential Oils with Pets – The Basics

Disclaimer: All of the information provided here is intended for educational purposes. The information is not intended to diagnose, treat, or prescribe for any illness. Please seek the advice of a qualified health care professional in your area of concern if you have a health challenge.

Pets are extremely sensitive to smell. If search and rescue dogs can trace the steps of a human, imagine how strong a Glade Plug-In must smell to them right at nose level! Along with this sensitive sniffer, also comes a physical sensitivity to artificial chemicals. We have documented some pretty interesting cases of liver and kidney value elevations from the use of cleaners, air fresheners, and odor eliminators. When a patient comes to us and smells of cigarette smoke, fabric softener, or perfume – I cringe. If I can smell these odors *on the pet*, imagine how strong the odors must be *in* that home. If you have ever gotten a headache after being exposed to someone's obnoxious perfume – just magnify this by 1000+ times – and you will be experiencing what a pet must experience.

Just because an odor is natural, does not mean it won't be offensive to a pet. We need to respect our pet's sense of smell when we use essential oils around them. Just like cats will start to run from you after getting pilled a few times, they may also need some treatments with natural remedies that will likewise make them flee the scene. There are unique circumstances where oils are needed medically, and we certainly deal with those as needed. But in everyday use of essential oils it is important to follow a few rules.

Always allow a pet an option to get away from an oil. When I diffuse an essential oil for the first time, I try to make sure it is in an open or larger room, and that any animals in my house, have the opportunity to leave the room if desired. I usually find that they actually gravitate toward the essential oil, but if need be, I want them to be able to get some fresh air. With birds in cages, just start out with a mild oil, and do not diffuse in a small, closed up room. Start farther away from animals that cannot leave the room, and stay with them the first few uses. Diffuse for all animals in small, short sessions first (15-20 minutes), and with a weak diffusing solution (2-4 drops in the ultrasonic diffuser). The ultrasonic water diffuser from Young Living has endless combinations of diffusion strengths and times.

When applying oils to pets, generally more dilution is best at first. There are some oils and some circumstances where I apply oils “neat” or undiluted to an animal, however the safest rule of thumb is to dilute the oil with Young Living’s V6 Oil Blend or with Extra Virgin Olive Oil. How much you dilute depends on the particular oil, but starting with a “weak” dilution, and increasing it if needed, is a good rule of thumb. To me, a weak dilution is 1-4 drops per ounce of diluting oil.

There are many ways to apply oils to a pet. You can apply it topically anywhere (except in eyes, into the ear canal, and on genitals). So, a sore knee can have oils applied right to the knee. I have applied oils to my dog’s bald tummy - easy access to a non-furry area! The oils will travel throughout the entire body, and get to where they need to be. Some people even apply oils to their pet’s feet. Depending on the pet, this can be an easy or difficult application. In general, I apply to the skin in between the toe pads, and not to the pads themselves. Again, if any irritation is noted (the pet chewing, excessively licking, running around, or any other “frantic” behavior) apply a diluting oil to the site. Then make a note of what dilution you need to use for that particular pet. Individuals can vary – so what is right for one pet, may not be right for others.

Tipping the Ears or Petting the “Cat” are two of the most popular ways to apply oils. I generally drip the essential oil into my non-dominant hand and add the diluting oil if necessary. Circle the oils three times counter clockwise, to energize the oils. (We’ll get into this in a future newsletter). Then stroke the oils onto the ear flap. I rub the ear between my thumb and forefinger, from base to tip. Careful to not use too much oil – it is okay if your hands actually feel almost dry, but have some scent of the oil on them. This is enough for most animals to have a treatment. Be careful with dogs with very long ears, if they flap their head, they could cause an ear to flip into their eye area – and cause discomfort. Just apply to the base of the ear in long eared pets.

Petting the Cat: Get your oils into your hands as described above. Then rub your hands together, until there is barely a residue. Then – just Pet your Cat (or dog, or even bird, reptile, snake, rat, ferret...). With adding mixing oils to dilute an oil – just be aware that if you use too much – your pet may get greasy. With this method, I have been just fine to apply oils neat to my hands – wait until they are mostly dry – then pet the animal. If you can smell the oil on your hand. You are still giving some therapy to your pet!

Another easy way to apply oils to pets – is with a spritzer bottle. You must use a glass bottle – the best ones are available at www.AbundantHealth4U.com. I use 4 oz bottles with distilled water. Add 2-4+ drops of oil to the bottle. Shake before each use, and spritz the area with the very dilute oil. This is also a way to diffuse an oil into the air without a diffuser. Great for safe and healthy bathroom deodorizer too! This is a great way to apply for large skin irritations, post surgical areas, feather picking birds, and even some cats.

Cats are unique. One might say, they are even from Mars > ‘.< Their liver enzymes do not metabolize things the same way as a dog or a human. Oils high

in eugenol or phenol compounds, can stress their liver. This is even more problematic and even fatal with the use of poor quality, non-medical grade oils. When a pure and medical grade essential oil is collected in its entirety, the trace amounts of chemicals which would normally be missed by the fragrance industry, act as a buffering agent to the rest of the compounds. Basically, if you do not collect the entire oil structure from a plant – you change its chemical make up - thus decreasing the medical benefits, and missing out on some very important properties. It is not always the highest percentage of a chemical that has the medical actions. Sometimes a compound only present at about 1% or less in an oil, is the actual force behind the healing effects.

Oils that are high in phenols and eugenols – are often referred to as “hot” oils. These would be oils that would make you irritated if you touched your face. Common oils to use caution with are: Basil, Cinnamon Bark, Clove, Eucalyptus (all), Lemongrass, Mountain Savory, Oregano, Pepper (Black), Peppermint, Thyme, and Wintergreen.

Of course blended oils containing “hot” oils should also be used with caution. Not that we can't use these oils – we just need to watch closely for reactions (redness, heat, irritation), discomfort, or smell aversions – as well as dilute, dilute, dilute.

The other very important aspect in using oils in animals (especially cats), is to support their system nutritionally. Giving Ningxia Red to animals while they are on essential oils can supply anti-oxidants, and nutrients vital to liver function. Not only will Ningxia Red help *any* health condition by supporting the body – but it is even more critical when we give medications, or injections, or even essential oils to sensitive patients. We have noticed that puppies and kittens who get 2-5cc of Ningxia Red post vaccination, have much less soreness, lethargy or reactions related to vaccination. When I had forgotten to give my own kittens Ningxia Red, they limped after a vaccination. Within 1/2 hour of me giving them a dose of Ningxia Red – all limping had stopped.

Future cases that will be presented – will include exactly how an essential oil was used, in conjunction with traditional medicine and any nutritional supplements used. When you first start working with essential oils, whether with your pets or your family – please feel free to contact me for specific instructions on how to use the oil. Through experience we gain the “common sense” specific to using essential oils. Just as you don't want to wash off an irritating oil with water – it becomes second nature to dilute with oil after just a few short months.

For some great information on how other people are using essential oils – please check out this site: www.oil-testimonials.com/1039262
It has a searchable data base, and can be just plain fun to look up many ways to use essential oils.

For more information about purchasing essential oils and equipment – feel free to contact me. Our clinic carries a small amount of Essential Oils Desk References, Aromatherapy A-Z books, and Glass Spray Bottles, trial size oils, and

supplies for sale. Before spending a ton of money on products that may not be ideal for your particular situation – please ask – and I can give you the best recommendations based on your individual needs. I am glad to help!

I hope you find this information helpful and educational. I am sure you will find essential oils as exciting and helpful as I have in our quest for a more natural, safe and healthful life.

Melissa Shelton DVM
Crow River Animal Hospital & Dental Clinic
Whole Mystic Health Care

www.CrowRiverAnimalHospital.com

320-286-3277

CrowRiverAnimalHospital@gmail.com or WholeMystic@gmail.com

Young Living Member # 1039262