

# A practical Guide to Aromatherapy

by Lorrie Hargis  
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A review by Martin Watt

This book contains several formulas for the internal use of essential oils at extremely hazardous levels.

Calculating potential toxicity or irritation levels is difficult because of the use of some kind of emulsifying agent which I have no information on. However, if essential oils are in an emulsion before consumption, the volume absorbed by the GIT is likely to be far higher than if the oil is taken in its natural state.

Certainly the recommended volumes of essential oils are far in excess of the maximum volumes recommended by competent authorities. For example, the author recommends on page twenty that 25 drops of thyme oil are consumed by a child. I have just checked the British Pharmacopoeia 1934 and the maximum recommended level of this oil for an ADULT is 0.3 ml or around 5-6 drops. A child's dose would be around 4 times lower or 1-2 drops. While the solubiliser may reduce the severe irritation on mucus membranes that thyme oil could cause, it does not reduce the potential toxicity problems if this formula were taken regularly. One of the potential toxic effects is liver damage.

In another example on page twenty we have 50 drops of clove oil recommended for an adult. Again in the BP 1934 the MAXIMUM level is 0.2 ml or around 4 drops of the oil, so this formula contains 12.5 times higher levels than the maximum recommended by a competent authority.

The question of 'competent authority' is the issue with the whole of this book. Nowhere do we find any references as to the authorities consulted on safety issues. Nor do we find references as to the source of the clinical applications of the oils other than to a few aromatherapists whose own knowledge levels are highly suspect.

Summary. It is this author's opinion that the information contained in this book **constitutes a very severe hazard to the general public.** It should either be withdrawn or much more explicate information be given on the dangers of using some of these essential oils at the suggested levels or for persistent periods of time.

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