

# Essential Oils and PHOTOSENSITIVITY



Some essential oils can **increase the photosensitivity of your skin**. For example, chemicals in the **citrus family** such as bergapten are notable for their phototoxic effects. When bergapten is left on the skin and then exposed to the sun it can amplify the effect of the UV rays, potentially causing sunburn and leading to sun spots. Some people like to avoid using bergapten-heavy oils topically altogether, but simply avoiding the sun after use (such as using it at night before bed) is sufficient. Alternatively, steam-distilled citrus oils have lower concentrations of bergapten and mitigate this effect.

This list of photosensitizing and non-photosensitizing essential oils comes from the National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy.

Common Phototoxic Oils	Non-Common Phototoxic Oils
<b>Angelica root</b> <i>Angelica archangelica</i>	<b>Bergamot: Bergapteneless</b> (FCF: Furanocoumarin Free) <i>Citrus bergamia</i>
<b>Bergamot</b> <i>Citrus bergamia</i>	<b>Lemon</b> (distilled) <i>Citrus limon</i>
<b>Cumin</b> <i>Cuminum cyminum</i>	<b>Lime</b> (distilled) <i>Citrus medica</i>
<b>Grapefruit</b> (expressed or distilled, low risk) <i>Citrus paradisi</i>	<b>Mandarin - Tangerine</b> <i>Citrus reticulata</i>
<b>Lemon</b> (expressed) <i>Citrus limon</i>	<b>Sweet orange</b> <i>Citrus sinensis</i>
<b>Lime</b> (expressed) <i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>	<b>Tangerine</b> (expressed) <i>Citrus reticulata</i>
<b>Orange, bitter</b> (expressed) <i>Citrus aurantium</i>	<b>Yuzu oil</b> (expressed or distilled) <i>Citrus junos</i>
<b>Rue</b> <i>Ruta graveolens</i>	<b>Rue</b> <i>Ruta graveolens</i>

**Great care should be taken when using citrus oils during summer months and with your children, but you don't have to avoid them all together. Many aromatherapists agree that heavily diluting citrus oils minimizes the risk.**