

Essential oils for women – natural support for PMS and menopausal symptoms

Mood swings, sleep problems, inner restlessness and premenstrual syndrome (PMS) can affect women at different stages of life. During perimenopause and postmenopause in particular, hormonal changes can also influence physical and emotional well-being.

In addition to nutrition, exercise and stress management, many women are interested in aromatherapy as a complementary approach. Current scientific research provides interesting evidence that certain essential oils may offer supportive benefits for some symptoms.

What are essential oils?

Essential oils are highly concentrated plant extracts obtained, for example, from flowers, leaves or citrus peels. Their aromatic compounds can influence areas of the brain involved in emotions and stress processing through the sense of smell. In citrus oils, compounds such as limonene and linalool play an important role. These plant compounds have been associated with a variety of biological effects.

Bergamot and grapefruit for PMS

PMS can significantly affect quality of life. Common symptoms include mood swings, irritability, fatigue, sleep problems, food cravings, bloating and pain. A randomized study published in 2025 investigated the effects of bergamot and grapefruit essential oils in women with PMS. Participants inhaled either bergamot oil, grapefruit oil or a placebo over several menstrual cycles.

Both bergamot and grapefruit were associated with an overall reduction in PMS symptoms. Grapefruit showed particularly positive effects on low mood, anxiety, fatigue, bloating, appetite changes and sleep disturbances.

Aromatherapy during perimenopause

Perimenopause – the transitional phase leading up to menopause – is a time when the female hormonal system undergoes increasing changes. Common symptoms during this phase include irregular menstrual cycles, worsening PMS, sleep problems, mood swings and inner restlessness.

During this stage of life, it can be beneficial to combine several supportive approaches: a balanced diet, regular physical activity, sufficient sleep and effective stress management. Aromatherapy may be a pleasant complementary option. Scents such as bergamot and lavender are commonly used for their relaxing and mood-supporting properties.

Bergamot and lavender in postmenopause

New research has also investigated aromatherapy in women after menopause. A study published in 2025 included 132 postmenopausal women and, among other approaches, investigated aromatherapy using bergamot and lavender.

After eight weeks, improvements were observed in overall menopausal symptoms, particularly anxiety and sleep quality. This is of particular interest because sleep disturbances, inner restlessness and mood changes are common during peri- and postmenopause.

How can essential oils be used?

The effects investigated in current studies were primarily achieved through inhalation. Possible methods include using a suitable diffuser, a personal aroma stick or inhaling the scent from a tissue. Essential oils are highly concentrated plant extracts and should never be applied to the skin undiluted. For topical use, essential oils can be appropriately diluted in a carrier oil such as almond or jojoba oil.

With citrus oils, particularly bergamot, additional caution is required when applying them to the skin and subsequently exposing the skin to sunlight. Certain compounds, such as furocoumarins, can increase skin sensitivity to UV radiation.

Conclusion: essential oils can be an interesting complementary approach

Current studies provide interesting evidence that bergamot and grapefruit may offer supportive benefits for PMS, while a combination of bergamot and lavender may help with certain symptoms in postmenopausal women. Aromatherapy can therefore be a pleasant addition to everyday life – but it does not replace necessary medical or psychological treatment.

My Tip: consider aromatherapy as a possible complement to a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle, and always pay attention to the quality of the essential oils, correct application and individual tolerance.

Would you like to adapt your diet specifically to PMS, perimenopause or menopause? I would be happy to support you with individual nutritional counselling and develop a strategy tailored to your current stage of life and everyday needs.

Book an appointment by phone at +43 1 9346206 or by email at kocijan@optimalessen.com.