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HOW AROMATHERAPY, MASSAGE,
REFLEXOLOGY, MEDITATION, YOGA ARE THE
TENDER TOOLS OF MODERN MOTHERHOOD

newagebaby heartandsoul

Peek through the window of any family home from Kentish Town to Macclesfield at bathtime these days and you'll probably witness the kind of scene that would have made Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, punch the air in triumph. Twenty-five centuries after he proclaimed, "The way to health is to have an aromatic bath and a scented massage every day," thousands of babies are being massaged by their parents every night, and are likely to become the healthiest generation we've ever seen.

AROMATHERAPY AND BABY MASSAGE

"Massage can promote the growth of myelin, the protective insulation around motor nerves that enables nerve impulses to travel faster," says Katie Whitehouse, founder and director of Vital Touch, an essential oils and massage product company. "That means that their fine motor skills may develop more quickly." Add some mood-enhancing aromatherapy oils, and you've got a magic combination. Each essential oil has a particular aroma and the therapeutic properties of essential oils have been well documented. Geranium and camomile are

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said to be calming while mandarin and grapefruit can be stimulating. Tea tree and lavender are antiseptic, and although peppermint and eucalyptus are useful decongestants for older children, they should not

be used with infants. Try ravensara instead, and rather than using a burner, try an aroma fan, an electric diffuser which gently wafts your preferred oil without heating or burning it. Plug it into your child's room half an hour before bedtime and you can say goodbye to sleep issues.

Katie Whitehouse is also a qualified aromatherapist and runs baby massage classes in Totnes. "Massage in the early weeks and months has been shown to help sleep patterns, digestive problems such as colic and wind, and stimulate immune function," she says. "But positive touch is more vital than we may realise. In America in the 1900s, 80 per cent of institutionalised babies and children died, although they were very well fed and conditions were

clean. Gradually it was realised that they were dying from lack of touch. Bringing simple cuddling and hugs into their lives saved them."

Katie works with midwives and parenting groups, and sees how massage often helps develop and reinforce bonding. "In my baby ►



