

## Post-Viral Olfactory Loss

### What is anosmia?

Anosmia is the loss of “olfaction,” or the sense of smell. It is related to hyposmia (reduced sense of smell) and phantosmia (smelling scents that are not actually there). All of these changes to olfaction can occur from viruses. Olfaction problems are particularly common from SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. The sense of smell and the sense of taste are very closely related.

### What is olfactory training?

Olfactory training is like physical therapy, but for the olfactory nerve. The olfactory nerve is responsible for the sense of smell and contributes significantly to the sense of taste. Olfactory training helps to restore normal function to the olfactory nerve. Several clinical studies have demonstrated that olfactory training can be very helpful for patients experiencing post-viral olfactory loss.

### How do I do olfactory training?

- Olfactory training is performed with four essential oils to stimulate different olfactory receptor nerves. Essential oils can be purchased at many grocery stores like Whole Foods, health food stores, or online. Please purchase:
  - Rose
  - Lemon
  - Eucalyptus
  - Clove
- For 15 seconds each, inhale slow, deep breaths through your nose while holding the open bottle of one of the essential oils up to your nose. Take about a 10 second break in between oils.
- ***Focus on your perception and memory of each smell.***
- Repeat this process two or three times daily, every single day, for 6 months.
- Many patients find it helpful to keep the essential oils next to their toothbrush so that they are reminded to perform their training at least twice daily.

### Other Treatments

Your doctor may also recommend other treatments to help your sense of smell return.

- Nasal steroid sprays, such as fluticasone, may reduce inflammation around the olfactory nerve.
- Omega-3 fatty acids can help the olfactory nerve heal. Try Nature Made Ultra Omega-3 Fish Oil 1400mg twice daily.

### Are there any side effects?

These products are generally safe, and side effects are rare. Please call our office if you have any concerns.

### FOR YOUR SAFETY

The loss of sense of smell can lead to certain health hazards.

- Be aware of your reduced ability to smell smoke or gas. Make sure you have smoke detectors at home with fresh batteries. Avoid gas furnaces or stoves if possible. Always check to be sure any appliances are turned off properly.
- Be aware of your reduced ability to smell spoiled food products. Be sure to double check expiration dates and examine perishable foods.