

Herbs in pregnancy

Herbal therapies can be a wonderful compliment and powerful tool in maintaining and promoting health. It is important to remember that herbs, although natural, are not harmless. Before starting any herbal therapy (supplement, tincture, tea, or tonic), talk with the midwife about potential benefits versus potential risks.

Pregnancy is never an appropriate time to experiment with herbs and dosage amounts. Taking large or many doses of an herb will not make it more effective and may be harmful to mother and baby. More does not mean better!

Helping herbs

These herbs can be taken in moderation, during pregnancy

<u>Common name</u>	<u>Latin name</u>	<u>Used for</u>
Nettle leaf	Urtica dioica	Good source nutrients; strengthens the kidneys and veins; helps postpartum bleeding
Ginger	Zingiber officinale	Morning sickness- helps alleviate nausea and vomiting
Peppermint	Mentha piperita	Morning sickness- helps alleviate nausea and vomiting
Spearmint	Mentha spicata	Morning sickness- helps alleviate nausea and vomiting
Oat straw	Avena sativa	Rich in nutrients; helps calm the nervous system
Red Raspberry	Rubus idaeus	Rich in nutrients; tones the uterus; can help nausea; helps with postpartum bleeding
Alfalfa	Medicago sativa	Good source of nutrients; increases maternal vitamin K stores; helps postpartum bleeding
Garlic	Allium sativum	Helps to fight infection (antimicrobial); helps to lower high blood pressure
Yellow dock	Rumex crispus	Helps to increase iron stores/good source of iron; can help relieve constipation
Echinacea	Echinacea spp.	Stimulates the immune system and helps to fight infection (antimicrobial)
Dandelion	Taraxacum officinale	Good source of iron and nutrients; supports the heart and liver

Pregnancy Tea

2 parts Red raspberry leaf	1/2 part Nettle leaf
2 part Alfalfa	1/2 part Rose hips
1 part Oat straw	1/4 part Peppermint or Spearmint

Mix dried herbs together and store in an airtight container away from heat and light. Place 1 tablespoon of herb mixture for every 1 cup of water into a glass jar. Add boiling water to the jar, cover, and steep for 20-30 minutes. Strain, sweeten if desired and drink 1 to 2 cups daily.

Harmful herbs

The following herbs are known to encourage bleeding (emmenagogues), cramping (uterine contractors), toxic to mother or baby, or may cause birth defects (teratogens), and should not be used in pregnancy.

<u>Common name</u>	<u>Latin name</u>
Goldenseal	Hydrastis canadensis
Cotton root	Gossypium herbaceum
Blue cohosh	Caulophyllum thalictroides
Black cohosh	Cimicifuga racemosa
Angelica	Angelica archangelica
Pennyroyal	Mentha pulegium

References

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