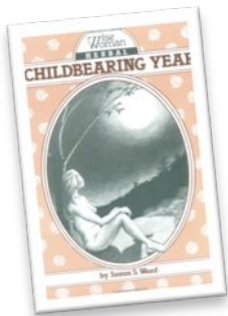


Herbs in Pregnancy

Herbs provide beneficial nourishment to the pregnant woman & relief from many common pregnancy

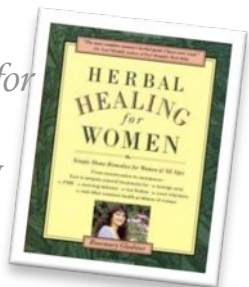


Additional Resources



*Wise Woman
Herbal for the
Childbearing Year*
By Susun Weed

*Herbal Healing for
Women*
By Rosemary
Gladstar



Are Herbs Safe?

Taken in small amounts and using only herbs that are known to be safe during pregnancy, herbs can provide relief for many minor pregnancy complaints and, under the supervision of an expert, can also be used for more complex problems during pregnancy.

Herbs do have powerful agents within them and so any herbal remedies should be used with care and caution. Especially during the tender first trimester as the baby is developing vital body structures and organs, avoid use of drugs and herbs unless necessary. When in doubt about the safety of a given herb, err on the side of safety and avoid that herb. Seek advice from qualified professionals regarding the safety of herbs you are considering.

The best way to benefit from herbs is to use them regularly as a source of nourishment, not only when you are ill or uncomfortable. Preventative treatment with herbs is more effective than treating advanced problems.

Need more information? Who to ask?

A qualified herbalist or health professional specially trained in the use of herbs during pregnancy (such as a midwife, nurse, physician, naturopathic physician, or a registered Chinese herbalist). You can also refer to organizations such as the American Botanical Council and the American Herbalists Guild.



Herbs to Promote & Maintain Healthy Pregnancy

Herbs are part of an optimal nourishment plan for pregnancy. They contain healing properties to soothe many of the most common discomforts of pregnancy and also are often rich in vitamins and minerals that support total health and well-being. The following is a list of some of the best herbs for us to promote and maintain a healthy pregnancy.

1. Nettle Leaf (*urtica dioica*): Nettle is the top pregnancy herb. It supplies large quantities of highly usable vitamins and minerals, promotes healthy kidney function, strengthens the blood vessels, reduces varicosities, and decreases the likelihood of hemorrhage at the time of birth.

It is recommended that nettle be a part of the diet of every pregnant woman because it nourishes the blood and prevents anemia. It prevents leg cramps, eases postpartum afterpains, nourishes the circulatory system and helps produce abundant breastmilk. Nettle may be prepared as a tea, or it may also be prepared as a vegetable, similar to dandelion greens (though you may want to use gloves as the leaves sting, which some find painful). Nettle is rich in vitamins A, C, D, and K as well as calcium, potassium, phosphorus, iron, and sulfur.

2. Dandelion Root and Leaves (*taraxacum officinale*): Highly

nutritious, dandelion is rich in calcium, potassium, and iron as well as vitamins A, B complex, C, and D. It is a powerful digestive tonic, liver strengthener, and aids the kidneys and bladder. It helps regulate blood sugar and blood pressure. It can help relieve nausea, sour stomach, itchy skin, and prevent gallstones, indigestion, fatigue, and possibly even toxemia.

3. Red Raspberry Leaf (*rubus idaeus*): Possibly the most highly proclaimed herb of pregnancy folklore, this herb nourishes the muscles and prevent hemorrhage due to its high iron content and astringent qualities. It is the classic uterine toner

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Herbs to Avoid during Pregnancy



- Aloe, *Aloe vera*
- Angelica, *Angelica archangelica*
- Beth root, *Trillium spp.*
- Black cohosh, *Cimicifuga racemosa*
- Blessed thistle, *Cnicus benedictus*
- Blood root, *Sanguinaria Canadensis*
- Blue cohosh, *Caulophyllum thalictroides*
- Calamus, *Acorus calamus*
- Calendula, *Calendula officinalis*
- Cotton root, *Gossypium herbaceum*
- Dong quai, *Angelica sinesnsis*
- Ephedra, *Ephedra vulgaris*
- Feverfew, *tanacetum prthenium*
- Ginseng, *Panax quinquefolium*
- Goldenseal, *Hydrastis Canadensis*
- Ipecac, *Ipecac ipechachuana*
- Mistletoe, *Viscum album*
- Pennyroyal, *Mentha pulegium*
- Poke root, *Phytolacca decondra*
- Rue, *Ruta graveolens*
- Sarsaparilla, *Smilax officinale*
- Shepherd's Purse, *Capsella bursa-pastoris*
- Tansy, *tanacetum vulgare*
- Wormwood, *Artemesia absinthum*
- Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*

Herbs for Pregnancy (continued from pg. 2)



and pregnancy tonic. It is rich in vitamins & minerals. It nourishes the muscles and prevents hemorrhage by preparing the uterus to function at its best. Red raspberry leaf can ease morning sickness and gently aid digestion.

4. Alfalfa (*medicago sativa*):

Extremely nutritious, alfalfa is high in protein, vitamins A, D, E, B6, and K, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, trace minerals and digestive enzymes. It is the most common source of chlorophyll and is high in carotenes as well. It is effective in preventing anemia and other vitamin and mineral deficiencies, prevents postpartum hemorrhage and strengthens the



Purchase herbs from a reliable source & be sure the common & Latin names corroborate with each other.

body systems.

5. Chamomile (*anthemis nobilis*; *matricaria chamomilla*):

Eases digestion, calms nausea, relieves heartburn, reduces insomnia, promotes gentle relaxation, relieves mental tension and headaches, reduces cramps, provides calcium,

prevents constipation, prevents urinary tract infections, and improves the appetite. Chamomile is also delicious when brewed as tea (1 T/1 c boiling water, steeped 10 minutes covered) with honey added.

6. Ginger root (*zingiber officinale*):

Ginger is effective for treating morning sickness as it has anti-nausea and anti-emetic properties. It stimulates circulations, and treats nausea, chills, and diarrhea. Do not take more than 2 grams per day as this is a strong herb and avoid if at increased risk for miscarriage. Drink as a tea or use in foot baths.

7. Oatstraw (*avena sativa*): Oatstraw is rich in calcium and magnesium. It promotes relaxed nerves and healthy muscle functioning, and prevents insomnia and cramps. It also strengthens the capillaries and therefore helps prevent and treat varicosities. Take this as tea.

8. Yellow Dock root (*rumex crispus*):

Prepared as a tincture or syrup, Yellow Dock root is an excellent source of fully absorbable iron. It helps to reduce anemia, supports the liver and prevents and remedies constipation.

9. Motherwort (*leonurus cardiaca*):

Motherwort is an herb of legend considered to strengthen the heart and promote courage. It calms without causing drowsiness. Take it after the first trimester to reduce stress and to relieve heart palpitations and mild hypertension. Be cautious with this herb as it can be habit forming. It is safe as a tea but terribly bitter.

10. Black Haw Root bark

(*viburnum prunifolium*): This herb is well regarded as an effective miscarriage preventative. Drink 2 cups of the tea daily.

11. False Unicorn root (*chamaelirium luteum*):

This herb is strongly recommended for women with a history of miscarriage. A powerful uterine tonic, take 3 drops of the tincture four to five times daily beginning a month before conception and continuing for the entire first trimester.

12. Comfrey (*symphytum officinale*, s.

caucasicum): Some people think comfrey should not be used during pregnancy or that it should be taken internally at all. However, there is not evidence to back this up, and many herbalists boast of the herb. When used responsibly (only the leaves) comfrey can heal many ailments including bronchial infections, alleviate pain and inflammation, and is abundant in protein, and vitamins A and C.

13. Kelp: This plant isn't exactly an herb but most Americans don't eat it regularly like a food therefore it gets treated more like an herb or supplement. It is the ideal nutritive supplement for pregnancy being rich in a variety of minerals and vitamins. Kelp is also very versatile. You can cook it as a vegetable, add to soups, or take in capsule form.