

# Herbs in Pregnancy

A thoughtful approach.



## Nature's Medicine

Using herbs to treat women during pregnancy dates back thousands of years. Even today approximately 45% of pregnant women use herbs in some form or fashion. Herbs can be used as a nutritional tonic or as medicine. Most herbs are safe for use during pregnancy. However, there are several that are not safe, and some conditions of pregnancy require pharmaceuticals. We encourage you to use herbs only under the guidance of someone who specializes in herbal medicine. It is important to remember herbs should not be used at all during the first trimester of pregnancy, unless there is medical necessity. When using herbs, teas and tonics are generally safe. Your midwife has been trained in the use of herbs for medicinal and nutritional use. Ask her about risks and benefits before using herbs.

## Herb Tips

- Follow the dosage guidelines given to you by your provider.
- Herbs affect you and your baby – be sure they are safe.
- Be sure to check the Latin name of the herb you wish to buy to avoid a devastating mistake.
- Chinese herbs may contain harmful contaminants – only use those provided by your Chinese medicine practitioner.
- Things labeled “natural” are not always safe for pregnancy.
- Know the herbs you are using and their potential side effects.
- Consult your herbalist or midwife if you have any questions.

## Danger Signs

Please contact your midwife before taking herbs if you experience any of the following:

- Vaginal bleeding or spotting
- Herpes blisters outbreak
- Severe pelvic or abdominal pain
- Severe pain in your mid-back
- Swelling of hands and face
- Severe headaches, visual problems, dizziness
- If you think your water broke
- Regular contractions before 37 weeks
- Absence of baby movements

## A Few Herbs that are Safe for Pregnancy

- \* Red raspberry leaf (*Rubus idaeus*)
- \* Echinacea (*Echinacea spp.*)
- \* Ginger (*Zingiber officinalis*)
- \* Cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*)
- \* Chamomile (*Matricaria Recutita*)
- \* Nettle (*Urtica spp.*)
- \* Yellow dock root (*Rumex crispus/obtusifolius*)



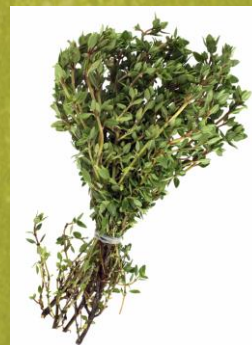
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## Herbs to Avoid

### A short list.

Alder buckthorn, <i>Rhamnus frangula</i>	Kava kava, <i>Piper methysticum</i>
Aloe, <i>Aloe vera</i>	Licorice, <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>
Angelica, <i>Angelica archangelica</i>	Life root, <i>Senecio aureus</i>
Arnica, <i>Arnica montana</i>	Lily of the valley, <i>Convallaria magalis</i>
Autumn crocus, <i>Calchicum autumnale</i>	Lobelia, <i>Lobelia inflata</i>
Barberry, <i>Berberis vulgaris</i>	Lupine, <i>Lupinus spp.</i>
Beth root, <i>Sanguinaria Canadensis</i>	Male fern, <i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>
Blue cohosh, <i>Caulophyllum thalictroides</i>	Mandrake, <i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>
Borage, <i>Borago officinalis</i>	Mistletoe, <i>Viscum album</i>
Broom, <i>Sarothamnus scoparius</i>	Motherwort, <i>Leonurus cardiaca</i>
Buckthorn, <i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	Mugwort, <i>Artemesia vulgaris</i>
Butter bur, <i>Petasites hybridus</i>	Nightshade, <i>Solanum spp.</i>
Butternut, <i>Juglans Canadensis</i>	Nutmeg, <i>Myristica officianalis</i>
Calamus, <i>Acorus clamus</i>	Oregano, <i>Origanum vulgare</i>
Calendula, <i>Calendula officinalis</i>	Oregon grape, <i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>
Casara sagrada, <i>Rhamnus purshiana</i>	Osha, <i>Ligusticum porten</i>
Castor oil, <i>Ricinus communis</i>	Parsley, <i>Petroselinum crispum</i>
Cherry bark, <i>Prunus spp.</i>	Parsnip, <i>Trachymene spp.</i>
Coleus, <i>Coleus forskohlii</i>	Pennyroyal, <i>Mentha pulegium</i>
Coltsfoot, <i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Peppermint, <i>Mentha piperita</i>
Comfrey, <i>Symphytum officianale</i>	Periwinkle, <i>Vinca spp.</i>
Cotton root, <i>Gossypium herbaceum</i>	Peruvian bark, <i>Cinchona spp.</i>
Cowslip, <i>Primula veris</i>	Pleurisy root, <i>Aesclepius tuberosa</i>
Damiana, <i>Turnera aphrodisiaca</i>	Poison hemlock, <i>Conium spp.</i>
Ephedra (ma huang), <i>Ephedra vulgaris</i>	Poke root, <i>Phytolacca decondra</i>
Eucalyptus, <i>Eucalyptus spp.</i>	Ragwort, <i>Senecio spp.</i>
Eyebright, <i>Euphrasia officinalis</i>	Red clover, <i>Trifolium pratense</i>
Feverfew, <i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>	Rhubarb, <i>Rheum palmatum</i>
Galbanum, <i>Ferula spp.</i>	Rue, <i>Ruta graveolens</i>
Ginseng, <i>Panax quinquefolium</i>	Safflower, <i>Carthamus tinctorius</i>
Goat's rue, <i>Galega officinalis</i>	Sage, <i>Salvia officinalis</i>
Goldenseal, <i>Hydrastis canadensis</i>	Sarsaparilla, <i>Smilax officinalis</i>
Gotu kola, <i>Hydrocotyle asiatica</i>	Scotch broom, <i>Cytisus scoparius</i>
Guarana, <i>Paullinia cupana</i>	Shepherd's purse, <i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>
Hellebore, <i>Veratrum spp.</i>	Stillingia, <i>Stillingia sylvatica</i>
Hops, <i>Humulus lupulus</i>	Tansy, <i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>
Ipecac, <i>Ipecac ipechachuana</i>	Thuja, <i>Thuja occidentalis</i>
Jimson Weed (Angel's Trumpet), <i>Datura spp.</i>	Tobacco, <i>Nicotiana spp.</i>
Juniper berries, <i>Juniperis communis</i>	Thyme, <i>Thymus vulgaris</i>
	Wormwood, <i>Artemesia absinthum</i>
	Yarrow, <i>Achillia millefolium</i>



### Research

Little research has been done in regard to herbs and pregnancy due to the same ethical concerns regarding studies involving pharmaceuticals and pregnancy. However, Romm (2018) states that herbal therapies are based on quite a significant body of historical, empirical, and observational evidence. Herbal practices have been recorded and passed down for many thousands of years. There is little evidence of harm with specific herbs that are generally avoided during pregnancy. We have provided a list for your information. Ask your midwife for a more comprehensive list.

## Teas for Pregnancy

Drink up to 4 cups, daily:

- Red raspberry leaf
- Chamomile
- Spearmint
- Lemon Balm
- Nettles
- Rose Hips
- NORA tea

### Reference:

- Davis, E. (2012). *Heart and hands: A midwife's guide to pregnancy and birth*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press.
- Romm, A. (2014). *The natural pregnancy book: Your complete guide to a safe, organic pregnancy and childbirth with herbs, nutrition, and other holistic choices* (Third ed.). Berkeley: Ten Speed Press.
- Romm, A. (2018). *Botanical Medicine for Women's Health*. Elsevier: St. Louis. Pg 255-6, 276, 434, 498, 220
- Herbal Materia Medica - herbs listed by latin name. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2015, from <http://www.herbaltransitions.com/BotanLat.html>