

HERBS IN PREGNANCY

MOUNTAIN HEART MIDWIFERY LLC

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SAFETY OF HERBS IN PREGNANCY

There are not a lot of studies on the safety of herbs in pregnancy, this is mostly due to the ethical considerations limiting human trials. The same could be said for the use of pharmaceuticals in pregnancy as well. Example is the thought that Tylenol was safe in pregnancy and they are now finding that it can cause potential problems for baby. What we know of herbal use in pregnancy is based on a significant body of historical, empirical, and observational evidence with few pharmacologic and animal studies. From this evidence the overall safety of herbs in pregnancy is high with little evidence of harm. This does not mean that you can just use any herb though. You want to avoid known toxic herbs, and the adulteration or inappropriate use or dosage of herbs. It is important to stick with the herbs with a proven safe track record for use in pregnancy. It is also important to always compare the risk to benefit ratio when looking at using herbs for specific conditions.



Thomé O. W. (Photographer). (1885). Flora von Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz. [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urtica>

SAFE HERBS IN PREGNANCY

The following herbs are commonly used in pregnancy and considered safe.

Red Raspberry Leaf (*Rubus idaeus*): This herb is considered a uterine tonic. It is said to tone the uterus making labor and delivery easier. It can also ease morning sickness and help in the production of breastmilk. Best used in Tea form, drink 1 cup daily throughout pregnancy.

Ginger (*Ziniber officinalis*): This herb is considered an anti-emetic, meaning it is great for nausea and vomiting as well as gas and bloating. You can take this as a Tea or in capsules. You can buy a ginger tea from the store or get a fresh ginger root and slice a few pieces of to steep in hot water for 10-20 mins. Drink as needed with nausea and gas.

Nettle (*Urtica dioica*): A nourishing herb, nettle leaves are high in many vitamins and minerals that are important in pregnancy. Benefits from drinking nettle tea include easing leg cramps, muscle spasms, reduce hemorrhoids, diminish pain during and after birth, and prevent hemorrhage after birth. The leaves can be eaten in salads or can be steeped in hot water to make tea. Drink 3 times a day.



Jaromer, K. (Photographer). (2007). Red Raspberry [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Malina.jpg>



Ginger plant. [Photograph]. (1896). Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ginger>

Chamomile (*Matricaria Recutita*): Best taken in Tea form, chamomile has many benefits during pregnancy. It can have a sedative effect helping with insomnia. It has antispasmodic properties helping relieve aches and pains. It can help with heart burn and indigestion, and the calming effect can help with tension and anxiety. You can get bags of the flower from the store or you can get dried flowers and steep them in hot water to drink throughout the day.

Herbs to avoid in Pregnancy

As in medicine there are herbs that should be avoided in pregnancy. And some that need to be avoided till the end of pregnancy. Important herbs to avoid entirely include: Herbs known to cause abortions; Pennyroyal (*hedeoma pulegioides*), Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), and Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*). Causes malformations in the fetus; Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*), Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*), Ginkgo Biloba, and St. Johns Wart (*Hypericum perforatum*). Volatile herbs that may stimulate the uterus; Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*), oregano (*Origanum vulgare*), and basil (*Ocimum basilicum*). Herbs that are avoided in earlier pregnancy but can be used under supervision at the end of pregnancy: Uterine stimulants; Blue Cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*), Black Cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*), Castor Oil, Cottonroot Bark (*Gossypium*), and Birthroot (*Trillium*).

Resources for more information

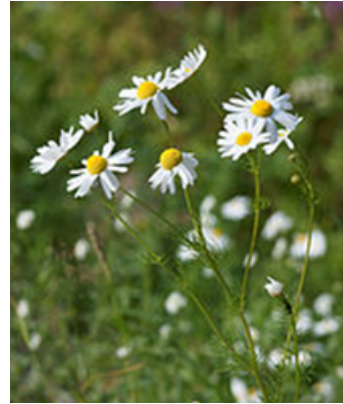
Books:

Wise Woman Herbal for the Childbearing Year
The Natural Pregnancy Book
Conceiving Healthy Babies: An Herbal Guide to Support
Preconception, Pregnancy, and Lactation
Herbal Healing for Women

Websites

<https://redmoonherbs.com/pages/education>
<https://americanpregnancy.org/healthy-pregnancy/is-it-safe/herbs-and-pregnancy-1003/>

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Kallerna. (Photographer). (2009). *Matricaria recutita*. [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chamomile>



Eric (Photographer). (2019). *Caulophyllum thalictroides*. [Photograph]. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caulophyllum_thalictroides_Arkansas.jpg



Liez (Photographer). (2010). *Cimicifuga racemosa*. [Photograph]. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Actaea_racemosa_002.JPG

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