

Dandelion (Taraxacum officinale)

HERBS

During Pregnancy

Common Herbs for Pregnancy

These herbs are considered safe and nutritive:

- Red raspberry leaf (*rubus idaeus*)
- Echinacea (*echinacea spp.*)
- Ginger (*zingiber officinalis*)
- Nettles (*urtica dioica*)
- Oat (*avena sativa*)
- Chamomile (*anthemis nobile*)
- Rose Hips (fruit of rose)
- Dandelion (*taraxacum officinale*)

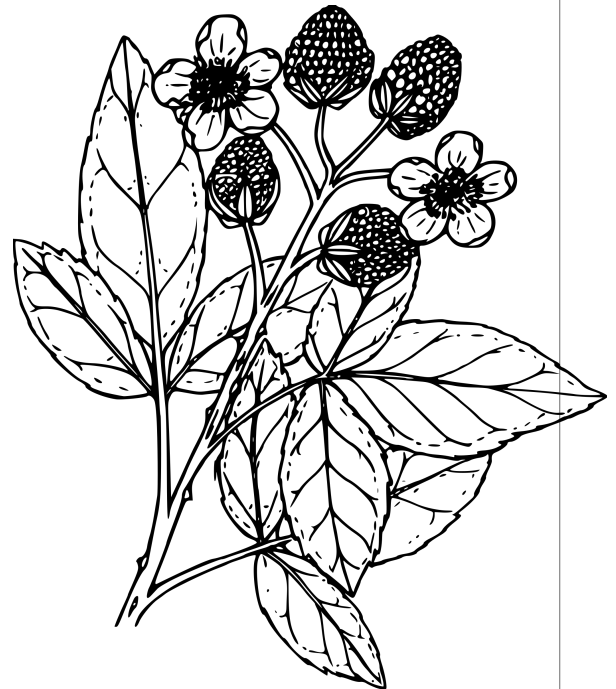
Other herbs are used during the childbearing year to treat various aspects of pregnancy and can be helpful should a problem arise. However, many pregnancies are healthy and many labors begin on their own without the use of these herbs. For this reason I do not routinely prescribe herbal regimens for labor.

Traditional Medicine

Many herbs have been safely used during pregnancy as a way to nourish the body, treat discomforts, and prevent disease for centuries. Since pregnancy is a time when some mainstream over-the-counter medications are contraindicated, many women learn to use herbs to treat issues such as colds, indigestion, headaches, etc. Herbs contain nutrients from the soil that much of our food is lacking in and are a valuable asset to a healthy pregnancy.

Handle with Care

While they are all natural, herbs are powerful plants with active and potent medicinal agents. If treating a specific condition, consult an herbalist. Always remember that more is not always necessary better. Follow the guidelines given for each herbal remedy, and avoid herbs during the first trimester unless medically indicated.



Red Raspberry Leaf (Rubus idaeus, R. strigosus)

The practice of herbal medicine is not regulated in the US, so be careful where you obtain your information (ie, the internet).

Herbs to avoid

- Herbs affecting hormonal balance
- Herbs containing pyrrolizidine alkaloids (Comfrey, coltsfoot, borage)
- Herbs that strongly promote digestive functions/ metabolism or that enhance cardiac function
- Laxative herbs
- Any herb you do not have prior experience with, aside from those on the common herbs for pregnancy list
- For a comprehensive list see [The Natural Pregnancy Book](#), by Aviva Romm
- For more tutorials on herbal remedies, I highly recommend [Naturally Healthy Babies and Children](#) by Aviva Romm

Sources:

- Davis, E. (2012). *Heart & hands*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press.
- Gladstar, R. (1993). *Herbal Healing for Women*. New York: Fireside.
- Romm, A. (2014) *The natural pregnancy book*. (3rd ed.). New York: Ten Speed Press.

Selecting Herbs

- Purchase from reputable suppliers. Herbs can be purchased in a dried form, packaged into tea bags, in capsules to swallow, or as a liquid tincture dosed with a dropper.
- Dried herbs should have a deep color and scent
- Choose organic or wildcrafted
- Use the Latin name rather than the common name to ensure you are getting the correct medicinal plant!

DIY

There are some safe ways to learn to make your own herbal products during pregnancy that can be beneficial to your knowledge base for caring for your baby naturally as well. These are some easy ways to get started:

Pregnancy Tea

Mix and store away from high temp and light:

2 parts red raspberry leaf

2 parts nettle

1/2 part rose hips

1/4 part spearmint leaf

Steep 1/4 cup of herbal mixture in 1 quart of boiled water, covered, for 30 minutes. Strain, sweeten, and enjoy at least one cup daily!

St. John's Wort Oil

For muscle or nerve pain try making your own massage oil this way:

Place dried St. John's Wort flowers in a jar and cover with preferred oil (choose a high-quality seed, nut, or vegetable oil). Then add 1-2 inches more oil. Place a warm, sunny spot to infuse for two weeks. Strain, rebottle, and enjoy externally.



Lemon balm (Melissa officinalis)