

# HERBS AND PREGNANCY: A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Welcome to the quick guide on using herbs during pregnancy! This handy resource compiles valuable insights from the expertise of the wonderful [Dr. Aviva Romm](#) and other herbalists. If you're an expectant mom dealing with common pregnancy symptoms, this guide has got your back.

It's filled with safe and proven herbal remedies to make you feel more comfortable, and covers which herbs to avoid during pregnancy and those that are totally safe, complete with recommended doses based on studies.

Just remember, this guide is for learning purposes, so always chat with your doctor for personalized advice on your unique pregnancy journey.

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# COMMON PREGNANCY SYMPTOMS

By Dr. Aviva Romm

Symptom/ Condition	Herbal Treatment	Application	Dose	Safety Comments/Concerns
Nausea and vomiting (NVP)	Ginger root	Tea Fresh or dried herb Other; ginger ale, candied ginger	Up to 1 gram daily; take in divided doses as needed for symptomatic relief	Several recent trials demonstrate the safety and efficacy of ginger for the treatment of NVP. This herb was previously contraindicated by the German Commission E and Botanical Safety Handbook due to concerns over mutagenicity, but these concerns have been resolved and the herb is considered safe for use in recommended doses.
Colds	Echinacea root  Ginger root	Tincture Capsules  Tea	3-5 ml up to 4x/day for 5-7 day 250-1000 mg/day for 5-7 days  See Above	Safe use was demonstrated during pregnancy in a retrospective clinical trial. Traditionally used as a tea of fresh root for the treatment of colds, chills, aches, and dyspnea associated with colds. See safety comments above.
Vaginal Yeast Infections	Tea tree oil  Garlic  Calendula oil	Suppository (as an anti-microbial)  Suppository (as an anti-microbial)  Suppository (as an anti-microbial)	3-5 drops per suppository, inserted 1-3 times daily  1 clove inserted 1x per night for 7 days	Safety during pregnancy has not been studied for the external application of these herbs but there is no known contraindication. Tea tree oil and garlic can cause contact irritation, therefore, use the former in suppository with other herbs and oil, and dip an un-nicked garlic clove in olive oil prior to insertion.
Iron Deficiency Anemia	Nettles  Floradix Iron & Herbs	Infusion  Extract	7-14 grams daily  As directed on the package	No studies available; widely used by midwives who report beneficial effects
Uterine tonic; ease labor and prevent labor complications	Red raspberry leaf	Infusion	1-3 cups daily	No known contraindications

# SAFE HERBS IN PREGNANCY

By Dr. Aviva Romm

Common Name	Botanical Name	Reason for Use	Clinical Trials in Pregnancy	Typical Daily Dose	Comments
Red Raspberry Leaf	Rubus Idaeus	Mineral rich nutritive tonic, uterine tonic to promote an expedient labor with minimal bleeding. Can also be used as an astringent in diarrhea.	Positive 12,13	1.5-5 g/ day in tea or infusion	Highly astringent herbs can theoretically interfere with intestinal nutrient absorption
Echinacea	Echinacea spp.	Reduce duration, recurrence of colds and URI	Positive 14	5-20 mL tincture	The dose listed here and considered safe by herbalists is higher than that used the study by Gallo et al.
Ginger	Zinigber officinalis	Anti-nauseant, antiemetic for NVP, hyperemeis gravidarum, and generally nausea	Positive 15,16	Up to 1g dried powder/day	Higher doses of ginger are traditionally considered emmenagogic.  Untreated hyperemeis gravidarum, in pregnancy can cause serious adverse outcomes
Cranberry	Vaccinium macrocarpon	Prevent and relieve UTI	None identified	16-32 fl. oz of juice/day	Untreated UTI in pregnancy can cause serious adverse outcomes
Chamomile	Matricaria Recutita	Promote general relaxation, treat insomnia, treat flatulence	None identified	1-5 g/day in tea	No reasonable contraindications.

# HERBS TO AVOID IN PREGNANCY

By Heidi Villegas

The following is not an exhaustive list of herbs to avoid. Other herbs may also fall into these categories. Always research!

Topical use of these herbs may be fine, although do avoid the essential oils listed altogether.

## Herb Categories to Avoid During Pregnancy

### Herbs that are known abortifacients & strong emmenagogues:

Angelica (*Angelica archangelica*)  
Mugwort (*Artemesia vulgaris*)  
Pennyroyal herb or essential oil  
Rue (*Ruta graveolens*)  
Safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius*)

Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*)  
Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)  
Thuja (*Thuja occidentalis*)  
Wormwood (*Artemesia absinthium*)  
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

### Herbs that contain high levels of potentially dangerous alkaloids:

Barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*)  
Borage (*Borago officinalis*)  
Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*)

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*)  
Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*)  
Oregon grape root (*Mahonia aquifolium*)

### Stimulating herbs or strongly depressant herbs:

Coffee (*Coffea arabica*)  
Ephedra sinica  
Guarana (*Paullinia cupana*)  
Kava kava (*Piper methysticum*)

### Herbs with high levels of phytoestrogens (may affect hormones):

Hops (*Humulus lupulus*)  
Isoflavone extracts  
Red clover (*Trifolium pratense*)  
Soy in large amounts

### Stimulating laxatives (These stimulate peristalsis of the intestines or spasms in smooth muscle):

Aloe vera (*Aloe barbadensis*)  
Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)  
Cascara sagrada (*Rhamnus purshiana*)

Castor oil (*Ricinus communis*)  
Rhubarb (*Rheum rhabarbarum*)

# HERBS TO AVOID IN PREGNANCY

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## Teratogens (May cause deformities or malformation of embryo):

Cherry bark (Prunus spp)  
Galbanum (Ferula spp)  
Hellebore (Veratrum spp)  
Jimson weed (Datura spp)  
Lupine (Lupinus spp)

Nightshade (Solanum spp)  
Parsnip (Trachymene spp)  
Poison hemlock (Conium spp)  
Ragwort (Senecio spp)  
Tobacco (Nicotiana spp)

## Possibly abortifacient and have emmenagogue actions:

Blue cohosh (Caulophyllum thalictroides)  
Coleus (Coleus forskohlii)  
Cotton root bark (Goddypium spp)  
Eucalyptus (Eucalyptus spp)  
Goldenseal (Hydrastis canadensis)

Motherwort (Leonurus cardiaca)  
Mugwort (Artemisia spp)  
Pennyroyal herb (Mentha pulegium)  
Tansy (Tanacetum vulgare)  
Yarrow (Achillea millefolium)

## Essential Oils: Completely avoid ALL internal essential oil use of any essential oil while pregnant or nursing. The following list should not be used at all:

Pennyroyal (Mentha pulegium)  
Peppermint (Mentha piperita)  
Oregano (Origanum vulgare)  
Sage (Salvia officinalis)

Tansy (Tanacetum vulgare)  
Thuja (Thuja occidentalis)  
Thyme (Thymus vulgaris)

This is a good list to start with, but just because an herb or essential oil is not on the list, please don't assume it's safe. **Do your due diligence, and research first!**