



*Reh Wild*  
Birth Collective

HERBS TO  
AVOID IN  
PREGNANCY

YOUR GUIDE TO USING HERBS  
DURING PREGNANCY

# IS IT SAFE?



This list of herbs is not exhaustive and features some of the most common herbs we use in Western Herbalism. In a lot of cases, there are no actual studies that indicate whether a plant is actually safe to ingest while pregnant and its safety profile is based on the potential hazard for harm. It is necessary to research thoroughly any herbs you intend to use while pregnant and always err on the side of caution. This document covers the internal use of herbs, the topical use of these herbs such as calendula is considered safe to use during pregnancy .

\* Note that some herbs will fall into more than one of the herbal actions listed however for ease of reference they are only listed in one category. This is not intended to replace medical advice and you should consult your medical provider before use of any herbal remedies.

One of the many questions asked when a woman finds out that she is newly pregnant is what herbs are safe or unsafe during pregnancy and nursing. It is important to know that there are very few studies that focus specifically on the safety of herbs during pregnancy and our understanding is largely based on an empirical evidence and tradition of use. For this reason, we tend to avoid certain classes or actions of herbs that may be unsafe to the mother or the developing baby. Herbs that have the following actions should be avoided in pregnancy and breastfeeding. However, there are herbs listed that can be used in a "cooking dose" such as thyme. It can be used in the kitchen but would not be used in a medicinal dose (High dose or tincture form)



# HERBS TO AVOID IN PREGNANCY

## ALKALOIDS/BIOACTIVE:

THIS CATEGORY OF HERBS SHOULD BE AVOIDED AS THEY ARE CHEMICALLY COMPLEX AND CONTAIN POWERFUL CONSTITUENTS SUCH AS ALKALOIDS THAT COULD BE HARMFUL TO THE DEVELOPING BABY.

---

- Barberry *Berberis vulgaris*
- Bloodroot *Sanguinaria canadensis*
- Blue flag iris *versicolor*
- Boneset *Eupatorium perfoliatum*
- Borage *Borago officinalis*
- Calamus *Acorus calamus*
- California Poppy *Eschscholzia californica*
- Celery Seed *Apium graveolens*
- Cinnamon *Cinnamomum verum*, *C. aromaticum*, *C. cassia* (Large doses)
- Comfrey *Symphytum* ssp.
- Damiana *Turnera diffusa*
- Elecampane *Inula helenium*
- Eucalyptus *Eucalyptus* ssp.
- Frankincense *Boswellia serrata*
- Goldenrod *Solidago* ssp.
- Goldenseal *Hydrastis canadensis*
- Gotu Kola *Centella asiatica*
- Horehound *Marrubium vulgare*
- Hyssop *Hyssopus officinalis*
- Juniper Berries *Juniperus* spp.
- Kava Kava *Piper methysticum*
- Lobelia *Lobelia inflata*
- Ma-huang *Ephedra sinica*
- Mimosa *Albizia julibrissin*
- Oregon Grape Root *Mahonia* spp.
- Osha *Ligusticum* ssp.
- Pleurisy Root *Asclepias tuberosa*
- Spikenard *Aralia racemosa*

# EMMENAGOGUES/UTERINE STIMULANTS:

HERBS THAT FALL UNDER THESE CATEGORIES CAN STIMULATE THE UTERUS AND ENCOURAGE MENSTRUATION AND THEREFORE QUITE OBVIOUSLY SHOULD BE AVOIDED DURING PREGNANCY. SOME OF THE HERBS LISTED IN THIS CATEGORY ARE ALSO SOME OF OUR FAVORITE CULINARY HERBS AND WHILE SPRINKLING THESE HERBS ON YOUR MEALS SHOULDN'T BE A CONCERN, LARGE OR MEDICINAL DOSES SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

- 
- Angelica Angelica  
Archangelica (All Angelica spp.)
  - Ashwagandha *Withania somnifera*
  - Basil *Ocimum basilicum* (Medicinal dose)
  - Beebalm *Monarda didyma* (all *Monarda* sp)
  - Bethroot *Trillium electrum* (All *trillium* sp)
  - Black Cohosh *Actaea racemosa*
  - Blue Cohosh *Caulophyllum Thalictroides*
  - Buchu *Agathosma betulina*
  - Calendula *Calendula officinalis*
  - Cedar *Thuja occidentalis*
  - Cotton Root *Gossypium herbaceum*
  - Fever Few *Tanacetum Parthenium*
  - Marjoram *Origanum Majorana* (Medicinal Dose)
  - Motherwort *Leonurus cardiaca*
  - Mugwort *Artemisia vulgaris*
  - Myrrh *Commiphora myrrha*
  - Nutmeg *Commiphora myrrha* (Medicinal Dose)
  - Pennyroyal *Mentha pulegium*
  - Sage *Salvia officinalis* (Medical Dose)
  - Southernwood *Artemisia abrotanum*
  - Thyme *Thymus* spp. (Medical Dose)
  - Tulsi *Ocimum tenuiflorum*
  - Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, *V. hastata*
  - Wormwood *Artemisia absinthium*
  - Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*

## LAXATIVE:

NOT RECOMMENDED DURING PREGNANCY AS THEY INCREASE CONTRACTIONS OF THE INTESTINES, ALSO KNOWN AS PERISTALSIS, WHICH CAN ALSO LEAD TO OR INCREASE UTERINE CONTRACTIONS.

- 
- Aloe Aloe Vera
  - Senna Senna Alexandria
  - Cascara Sagrada/Buckthorn
  - Rhammus purshiana

## HORMONAL:

THESE HERBS CAN CAUSE HORMONAL CHANGES IN THE BODY AND ARE THEREFORE AVOIDED SO AS NOT TO DISRUPT THE DELICATE BALANCE OF HORMONES THAT THE BODY CREATES TO SUSTAIN A PREGNANCY.

- 
- Agave Agave americana
  - Fenugreek Trigonella foenum-graecum
  - Ginseng Panax spp.
  - Hops Humulus lupulus (external application ok)
  - Lady's Mantle Alchemilla spp.
  - Licorice Glycyrrhiza glabra
  - Peony Peonia spp.
  - Sarsparilla Smilax officinalis

## TOXIC:

THESE HERBS CONTAIN COMPOUNDS THAT ARE DEEMED HARMFUL TO BOTH THE MOTHER AND HER UNBORN CHILD. ALTHOUGH CLASSED AS TOXIC, THESE HERBS ARE SOMETIMES GIVEN UNDER CLOSE SUPERVISION BY EXPERIENCED HERBAL PRACTITIONERS AS LOW DOSE BOTANICALS BUT QUITE OBVIOUSLY SHOULD BE AVOIDED DURING PREGNANCY.

- 
- Arnica Arnica spp. (Homeopathy only)
  - Black Walnut Juglans nigra
  - Devil's Claw Harpagophytum procumbens
  - Foxglove Digitalis spp.
  - Lily of the Valley Convallaria majalis
  - Male Fern Dryopteris felixmas
  - Mistletoe Viscum album
  - Peruvian Bark Chinchona spp.
  - Pokeroot Phytolacca spp.
  - Rue Ruta graveolens
  - Tansy Tanacetum Vulgare

CONNECT  
*with us*



ReWild Birth Collective

—  
hello@rewild.care  
540-280-7270

WWW.Rewildbirth.COM



# NOTES

