



## USE OF HERBS DURING PREGNANCY

### REGULATION AND SAFETY

The FDA, a government agency, monitors herbal products. The FDA does not test these products before you buy them.

A harmful herbal product, thus, remains for sale until the FDA proves it can cause harm to you or your baby.

### NATURAL DOES NOT MEAN SAFE

Many people think that herbs are safer than medicines. Herbs are natural, but they are not always safe to consume.

Just like medicine, herbs have side effects and safety concerns. Many herbs are not safe to use during pregnancy.

### RESERACH ON HARMS

There is little research on the side effects and safety of herbal product use during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

We do not know if these products are helpful or harmful to you and your baby. It is risky to use herbs during pregnancy.

### PRODUCTS THAT CAN HAVE HERBS

- Essential Oils
- Teas
- Infusions
- Tinctures
- Tablets
- Capsules
- Powders

3 of 4 women who use herbs during pregnancy do not tell their doctor or midwife

# HERBS AND SAFETY CAUTIONS

## Morning Sickness

- **Ginger** (chews, tea, tablets): Limit how much you consume. Ginger can cause vaginal bleeding and abortion. Your baby may be born with a smaller head or a shorter-than-normal size.
- **Lemon Oil:** Aromatherapy with 2 drops may be safe after the first 13 weeks.
- **Mint and Peppermint** (oil, tea, popsicles): Mint tea popsicles may be helpful. Aromatherapy after the first 13 weeks may be safe. But use mint with caution. It can induce abortion.

## Back Pain

- **Lavender Oil:** Aromatherapy may be safe, but don't use it during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy.
- **Turmeric Tea:** Use cautiously and in small amounts. Turmeric can induce abortion and be toxic.
- **Yiang Yiang Oil:** Don't use it during the first 13 weeks. Aromatherapy inhaled right before labor may help reduce pain.

## Sleep

- **Chamomile Tea:** Risky to use during pregnancy. Daily drinking can cause preterm delivery, lower birth weight, and smaller-than-normal size. Chamomile tea can contain toxins that cause food poisoning.
- **Passionflower Tea:** Don't use it during pregnancy because it can cause contractions. Limited evidence for safe use while breastfeeding.

## Anxiety/Moodiness

- **Kava Kava:** Don't use this herb during pregnancy. May harm the baby.
- **Lemon Balm Tea:** Don't use it during pregnancy. No studies on safety.
- **Linden Tea:** Don't use it during pregnancy. No studies on safety.
- **Nettle Tea:** Don't use this herb during pregnancy. It can cause miscarriage.
- **Oat Straw Tea:** Don't use it during pregnancy. No studies on safety.
- **Saint John's Wort** (tea, capsule): Don't use this herb. It can harm your baby.

Talk with your  
doctor and dietitian  
about using herbs  
during pregnancy and  
breastfeeding

