

Herbal Remedies for the Postpartum Family

CLASSIFICATIONS OF HERBS:

adaptogens W

anti-inflammatory W
antiseptic W

Astringent W

blood building TCM

blood moving TCM

carminative W

calm the spirit TCM

Cooling TCM

Drying TCM

galactagogue W

heat clearing TCM
hemostatic W

Moistening TCM

nervine W

Nourishing W/TCM

Qi tonifying TCM

relaxants W

sleep aids W

Tonifying TCM/W
warming TCM

*TCM = Traditional Chinese Medicine

**W = Western

MATERIA MEDICA: HERBS SUPPORTING POSTPARTUM TRANSITIONS

Alfalfa Medicago sativa

Parts: leaf, sprouts, above ground plant parts

Use: Helps prevent hemorrhage when taken regularly in the form of an infusion. It is high in Vit. K and helps make hemoglobin more available in blood. Is also a nutritive plant that supports the breastfeeding mom's constitution as a galactagogue.

Astragalus Astragalus membranaceus huang qi

Part: root

Use: adaptogen, diuretic, antiviral, cardiogenic, hepatoprotective tonify Qi, sweet, slightly warm.

Boosts immunity by tonifying *Wei Qi*. It regulates fluid metabolism while promoting urination and reduce deficiency edema. Promotes lactation. It raised Yang to support prolapsed organs and exhaustion.

Dandelion *Taraxacum mongolicum*

Parts used: leaf and root

Use: astringent; galactagogue; mild laxative; diuretic, antibiotic; stomach bitters

Clears liver heat and cleanses the blood and liver. Can help lower blood pressures.

Dang Gui *Angelica sinensis*

Part: Chinese Angelica root

Use: emmenagogue, analgesic, sedative, mild laxative (due Blood Deficient patterns), warm, sweet, bitter. Tonifies blood while invigorating blood circulation. Causes red cell proliferation which rebuilds blood, esp. after birth. It moistens the intestines.

Echinacea *Echinacea spp.*

Part: root

Use: cool; spicy; bitter; Lungs, Stomach, Liver; clears heat; antiseptic, vulnerary; stimulant, antibiotic, lymphatic, antiviral; Activates leukocytes and T-cell formation. Clear blood heat/toxins and detoxify lymph tissue and is an effective treatment to mastitis. Can be used topically to help clear toxins and inflammation from insect bites, poison oak, and spider bites. Safe to use in all dose ranges.

Fennel *Foeniculum vulgare*

Part: seeds

Use: carminative, antispasmodic, galactagogue, diuretic, expectorant, warm, sweet, spicy, regulates Qi

Helps ease indigestion, abdominal pain, and GI tract spasms. Fennel is quoted to have phytoestrogen effects, which may account for its lactation support while aiding in nutrient/water management.

Fenugreek *Trigonella foenum-graecum*

Part: seeds

Use: nutritive, galactagogue, carminative, demulcent; warming; bitter; tonifies Yang

Take as a warm tea or in tincture form when trying to establish or maintain milk supply. Change in dosage may increase or decrease milk supply (lowering dose can lower milk supply).

Garlic *Allium sativum*

Parts used: bulb

Use: stimulant; antimicrobial; digestive, cardiotoxic - hypotensive; antifungal

Good defense against common colds and flues. Regulates blood pressure and works well for those with higher and lower blood pressures. Can help manage Candida with internal use. Eat raw - heat will break down its active constituents.

Ginger *Zingiberis officinalis*

Parts used: rhizome

Use: warming; diaphoretic; antispasmodic; digestive; emmenagogue

Fresh root is ideal for the pregnant constitution - providing digestive support while warming joints, muscles, and ligaments.

Nettles *Urtica dioica*

Parts used: leaves, seed and root (leaves are most commonly used during pregnancy/postpartum)

Use: diuretic, uterine/ UT tonic, galactagogue, astringent, expectorant, nutritive Possesses Vitamin C and A, iron, potassium, calcium, magnesium, which helps nourish kidney function, strengthening blood vessels, nourish the blood, reduces varicosities, reduces probability of hemorrhaging at time of birth and supports immune system function. It is safe to work with in all stages of female sexual health. General tonic herb for most female constitutions.

Peony *Paeonia lactiflora bai shao*

Part: white peony root

Use: tonify blood - blood nutritive tonic, emmenagogue, antispasmodic, astringent, antihypertensive, analgesic, sedative, antibiotic, cool, bitter.

Nourishes blood and helps maintain Yin, and helps regulate uterine bleeding. It works as a muscular and nervous sedative to support relaxed muscles and mind. Helps work through stagnant Liver Qi and alleviate night sweats, dizziness, and abdominal spasms.

Red raspberry leaf *Rubus idaeus*

Parts used: leaf

Use: astringent; uterine tonic; hemostatic

A general uterine tonic, strengthening uterine muscle. Eases nausea and prevents hemorrhaging.

Siberian Ginseng (Eleuthero) *Eleutherococcus senticosus*

Part: root bark

Use: adaptogen, energy tonic, antispasmodic, antirheumatic, warm, sweet, acrid. Tonifies Qi and can be applied to chronic fatigue. When used consistently it acts as a adrenal tonic especially for over exertion.

Tumeric *Curcuma longa*; Zingiberaceae

Parts used: tuber (cooling) and rhizome (warming)

Use: Nourish and moves blood, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, mood support, analgesic. Tumeric is related to ginger and works well together especially to relieve muscle pains, postpartum night sweats, and gas. It moves blood and helpful in relieving swelling due to “trauma.” Tumeric is antimicrobial without killing beneficial gut flora and can help balance Candida growth.

FORMULATION EXAMPLES:

Think Balance!

Postpartum sitz bath

1 part Yarrow (antiseptic , astringent, hemostatic , UT tonic)

1 part Calendula (antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, tissue regeneration, soothing)

½ part Lavender (antiseptic, mind/body comfort, soothing, anesthetic)

1 part Uva ursi (astringent, UT tonic)

1 part Shepard’s purse (hemostatic, UT tonic, oxytocin rich - help with uterine cramping)

Happy Postpartum & Breastfeeding Tea

1 part Nettles (diuretic, galactagogue, nourishing, uterine tonic, mineral rich)

1 part Chamomile (Calms the spirits, digestive aid, gentle GI & uterine antispasmodic, helps ease nausea, emmenagogue, absorbable calcium which helps sooth nerves, helps bring sleep, carminative, help with afterpains.)

*Catnips is also great for afterpains, gas relief, nausea, fevers

1 part Alfalfa (Helps prevent hemorrhage when taken regularly in the form of an infusion. It is high in Vit. K and helps make hemoglobin more available in blood. Is also a nutritive plant that supports the breastfeeding mom’s constitution as a galactagogue)

1 part Hops (Galactagogue, calm the spirits, gentle sleep aid)

1 part Milky oat (nutritive, calm the spirit, galactagogue)

½ part Fennel (aromatic, carminative, antispasmodic, galactagogue, diuretic, expectorant, warm, sweet, spicy, regulates Qi)

½ Lemon Balm (aromatic, calm the spirit, uplifting, carminative, diaphoretic, antiviral, calming, antispasmodic, nervine. *If mom is working hard to get her milk supply up, substitute rosehips for lemon balm. Being from the mint family

([Lamiaceae](#)), it could be too drying to a mom having a hard time producing milk, esp if she has a mint sensitivity.

HERBS & BREASTFEEDING

Classification of herbal safety according to *The Botanical Safety Handbook* by McGuffin et al 1997

- Class 1 Herb is safe to consume when used appropriately.
- Class 2 Herb has specific restrictions in its use and application
 - 2a. For external use only
 - 2b. Not for use during pregnancy
 - 2c. Not to be used while breastfeeding
 - 2d. Other specific use restrictions as noted
- Class 3 Herb that have substantial data backing its use only under the supervision of an expert qualified to use it.
- Class 4 Herb has insufficient data regarding its safety and use.

Herbs to avoid during nursing:

Alkanet
Aloe vera
Aloes
Basil
Black cohosh
Bladderwracker
Borage
Bugleweed
Cascara Sagrada
Chinese rhubarb
Coltsfoot
Comfrey
Ephedra
Garlic*
Joe Pye
Licorice*
Male Fern
Purging Buckthorn
Senna
Stillingia
Sage
Peppermint
Parsley
Wormwood

Postpartum Tumeric and Ginger chicken Soup

8 cups of cold water

9 tongs of astragalus

1 cup of chopped fresh ginger

1 cup of graded fresh turmeric (firmly packed)

2 tbsp of powdered tumeric

1 packages of dried shitake mushrooms

1 handful of Ziziphus jujube Jujube Dates (aka red dates, Chinese dates)

1 piece of kombu

1 chicken

1 piece of placenta - optional

1 tablespoon of miso -optional

Vegetables of choice.

Combine chicken, huang qi, & vegetables in stock pot. Bring to boil and simmer until chicken is thoroughly cooked. Near end of cook time, add placenta. Take soup off heat after several minutes of cooking. Cool until 120 degrees F. Add miso.

HERBS SUPPORTING CHILDHOOD

Infant & Childhood Dosage Guideline*

Teas

When the adult dose is 1 cup (8 oz.) of tea, the following is recommended for children:

Age Dosage

Younger than 2 years 1/2 to 1 teaspoon

2 to 4 years 2 teaspoons

4 to 7 years 1 tablespoon

7 to 11 years 2 tablespoons

Tinctures

When the adult dose is 2 droppersful (60 drops), the following is recommended for children:

Age Dosage

Younger than 3 months 2 drops

3 to 6 months 3 drops

6 to 9 months 4 drops

9 to 12 months 5 drops

12 to 18 months 7 drops

18 to 24 months 8 drops

2 to 3 years 10 drops

3 to 4 years 12 drops

4 to 6 years 15 drops

6 to 9 years 24 drops

9 to 12 years 30 drops

Other ways to determine dosage:

Young's Rule - Add 12 to the child's age. Divide the child's age by this total.

Example: dosage for a 4 year old: 4 divided by 16 (4+12) = .25, or 1/4 of the adult dosage.

Cowling's Rule - Divide the number of the child's next birthday by 24. Example: dosage for a child who is 3, turning 4 would be: 4 divided by 24 = .16, or 1/6 of the adult dosage.

*Reference used: Herbal Remedies for Children's Health ” by Rosemary Gladstar

Calendula *Calendula officinalis*

Parts: flowers

Use: neutral to warm; bitter; Liver Heart, Lung; invigorates Blood; vulnerary, astringent; antispasmodic, demulcent; antifungal, antiviral, antiseptic. Calendula tincture applied chicken pox eruptions can take the itch out while minimizing viral load. Ideal for washes or sitz baths for it's ability to soothe inflamed tissue while supporting tissue regeneration after injury.

Catnip *Nepeta cataria*

Parts: leaves

Use: sedative, antispasmodic, carminative, calm the spirits, clears heat. Can help settle a mom's digestion and that of the colicky baby by easing stomach and intestinal spasm. Reduces irritability, mild diaphoretic to fever associated with cold/flu. When taken with chamomile, it can reduce pain of after birth cramping.

Chamomile *Matericaria recutita* (German chamomile)

Parts: flowers

Use: neutral; bitter; Liver, stomach, and Lungs; calms the spirit, antispasmodic, and anti-inflammatory. It's high dose of calcium speaks to it's ability to soothe nerves, cramps and spasms (like afterbirth pains), and irritability. Use to calm and soothe a crying, teething baby - soak teething toy in chamomile tea.

Echinacea *Echinacea spp.*

Part: root

Use: cool; spicy; bitter; Lungs, Stomach, Liver; clears heat; antiseptic, vulnerary; stimulant, antibiotic, lymphatic, antiviral; Activates leukocytes and T-cell formation. Clear blood heat/toxins and detoxify lymph tissue and is an effective treatment to mastitis . Can be used topically to help clear toxins and inflammation from insect bites, poison oak, and spider bites. Safe to use in all dose ranges. Can be taken while breastfeeding.

Elder *Sambucus nigra*

Parts: berry and flower

Use: (flower) cool; bitter spicy; antiviral; diaphoretic, mild laxative; diuretic
Berries are high in vitamin C. It is an effective antiviral that shortens the healing time from a cold and flu. Can provide gentle sinus decongestive properties. When flowers are taken as a tea (can combine with yarrow), it can bring on a sweat to release the exterior at the beginning of a cold/flu. Can be taken while breastfeeding.

Licorice *Glycyrrhiza glabra* gan cao (raw)

Parts: root

Use: neutral, sweet, enter all meridians esp. Heart, Lung, Spleen and Stomach; anti-inflammatory, nutritive, demulcent, antitussive. Licorice is often used to harmonize a formula because of its ability to enter in all meridians. Use for teething babies to help soothe gum inflammation. It is also a gentle laxative for children. Its demulcent properties soothe inflamed mucus membranes in the throat, lung and stomach. Can be taken while breastfeeding.

Lemon balm *Melissa officinalis*

Parts used: leaf

Use: carminative, diaphoretic, antiviral, calming, antispasmodic, nervine . Being from the mint family, it manages to uplift one's spirit upon inhalation while working as an effective antiviral in the treatments of colds and flu. It can aid in breaking a fever and supports healthy digestive function.

0-3 Month infants & Herbal Medicine

Supporting the mother and her constitutional needs is the best way to support the newborn. Ideally, any herbal medicine needs can be met by the mother taking the herbs.

Newborn Gas & GI Support

Check-in with mother about her digestion and diet. Weed out any possible irritants (dairy, soy, vegetables in the Brassica family, caffeine, etc) in mom's diet. Mom can drink herbal infusions of fennel, ginger, dill, and catnip to work for digestive health.

Herbal remedy for gas herbal infusion:

1 part catnip

1 part chamomile

1 part fennel

Can be given to babies 1 mon+ old via bath/warm washcloth or dropper (like Gripe water). See dosage rules above.

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