



Herbs, Vitamins and Natural Supplements in Pregnancy

There are many unknowns about the safety of over the counter herbs and supplements during pregnancy. Although many of these products have been safely used for centuries, most have not been formally evaluated in the setting of pregnancy. Because the ingredients are often naturally occurring, they may seem like they are more effective, more accessible, and as if they have fewer side effects than conventional medicines. However, many of the active ingredients in these products can have serious and harmful effects. Additionally, as over the counter preparations, they are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Thus, the exact type and concentration of ingredients on the label may not always match the actual product consumed. Also, if you take other medications, there could be herb-drug interactions that are unpredictable and undesirable

Given this, here are a few recommendations:

- Avoid using herbs and supplements in the first trimester (up to 14 weeks).
- Please talk with your doctor about all herbs, vitamins and supplements you are using.
- The average recommended daily allowances of vitamins are fine to consume

The following are considered to **likely be safe, in small to moderate amounts**, in pregnancy:

- Ginger (<4g/d), Vitamin B6/pyridoxine, Echinacea, vitamin E, Magnesium, Calcium, vitamin C.

The following are **possibly safe, but safety information is very limited**:

- Peppermint oil (may worsen heartburn), Chamomile, Melatonin

The following **are unsafe** for use in pregnancy:

- Black Cohosh, Blue Cohosh, Licorice
- Vit. A (1000 RE/day is the recommended limit in pregnancy)

Teas you can purchase at the grocery store on the coffee and tea aisle are also safe, it's the highly concentrated form of some of the ingredients that is not recommended.

Essential Oils to Avoid in Pregnancy:

- Wintergreen
- Sage
- Nutmeg (does not work well with narcotics)
- Rosemary- Increases blood pressure
- Juniper- affects the kidneys

Essential Oils That Are Okay After 37 weeks Gestation:

- Clary Sage
- Jasmine