

List of Galactagogues - Herbs that Increase Breastmilk Production

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Herb Lore

A galactagogue is an herb that is used to help increase breastmilk production in nursing mothers. Below is a list of some of the more effective and popular ones and some important information about each:

Fenugreek - one of the best and strongest herbs for increasing milk production. When taken in very large amounts, Fenugreek is also used for lowering blood sugar levels, and is, therefore, not recommended for use by diabetics or those who are on strict insulin regimens to regulate their blood sugar levels. It also works on the digestive system, and in a small percentage of people, it may cause gas in either the mother or baby. Many mothers of adopted babies have successfully used this herb to help establish a breastmilk supply to feed their adopted babies. Fenugreek is not recommended for use during pregnancy as it can cause uterine activity. Fenugreek must be used with consistency for best results, otherwise it can negatively affect or decrease milk production.

Goat's Rue - Goat's Rue is a powerful herb for stimulating milk production and increasing the flow of breastmilk. It has been shown to increase milk production by 50% in many cases, and may also stimulate the development of the mammary glands themselves. This herb is safe for use during pregnancy. This herb is one of the main ingredients of the Nursing Tea/Nursing Tincture. It can be used as a single herb by itself, or to use along with or to add to the Nursing Tea/Tincture when something a little stronger is needed.

Fennel - this herb is great for increasing breastmilk production, and at the same time is also extremely helpful in relieving symptoms of gas or upset stomach. It is the perfect herb to take in conjunction with Fenugreek, when gas is a problem. This is also one of the main ingredients of the Nursing Tea/Nursing Tincture, as well as the Tummy Tea/Tummy Tincture which is specifically formulated for gas, colic, reflux and indigestion.

Red Raspberry Leaf - also one of the ingredients of the Nursing Tea/Nursing Tincture. It not only helps to increase breastmilk production, but it also will help the uterus recover after birth, as it is a uterine toner. Red Raspberry Leaf is incredibly high in vitamins and minerals, including Niacin (a B vitamin), which has been said to be helpful in relieving symptoms of Reynaud's Syndrome.

Vitex - although this herb is a prolactin-inhibitor, it has traditionally been used, and is proven in case studies, to actually increase breastmilk production in nursing mothers. Its main function is that of balancing hormones, therefore, this herb is very helpful for women who are experiencing hormonal imbalances, such as PMS symptoms, while breastfeeding. Note: Vitex use may re-start the menses in nursing women.

Alfalfa - a great herb for increasing breastmilk production while providing the body with lots of good vitamins and minerals. It is very high in Vitamin K in particular, which helps to staunch bleeding. Many midwives encourage all their clients to take Alfalfa for at least six weeks before birth, and for several months afterwards, to help avoid hemorrhage at the birth, and to help the body recover and make plentiful breastmilk afterwards. (Alfalfa is also an ingredient in the Nursing Tea/Nursing Tincture. Note: This herb is not recommended for use by those on blood-thinning medications due to its high levels of Vitamin K.

Nettle - a similar herb to Alfalfa. Helps to enrich the milk.
(Also a Nursing Tea/Nursing Tincture ingredient.)

Blessed Thistle - also known as "Our Lady's Milk Thistle". It increases breastmilk while helping to alleviate mild forms of postpartum depression. It is a bitter herb (known as a digestive bitter), which is healthful for the liver and digestion. Although it is an effective herb for increasing milk production, it is no longer included in the Nursing Tea. Many customers found it to be too bitter and did not like the taste, therefore hesitated to use the tea. We do have Blessed Thistle available as a single herb in the tincture form.

Borage - traditionally used to help balance the adrenals as well as increase breastmilk production. It is **not** for use on a long-term basis, and because it contains an alkaloid that can be hard on the liver, it is not one of the herbs that is recommended for nursing mothers/babies.

Hops - used in many cultures for years to help with breastmilk production. You've heard women say that they "breastfed their babies on beer"? The Hops is why. Beer from other countries has Hops that are helpful, but our beer here in this country is not as effective. It is the dark German beers that tend to have the right ingredients or the right quality of Hops. Hops is **not** on the list of favorite herbs recommended for increasing breastmilk production, however, because it can be quite sedating and it can cause depression with prolonged use. **NOTE:** The drug Reglan, commonly used to increase breastmilk production, can also cause depression. Domperidone is another pharmaceutical drug used to increase lactation, but it does not seem to have this depression-causing quality.

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- What affects milk production?
 - What are all of the different herbs, products or techniques used to increase production?
 - Why returning to work or starting baby on solids can decrease your supply and how to overcome that.
 - Why it can be common for women who've had a C-Section to have milk supply problems.
 - Should you use herbs to establish a milk supply even before you give birth? Especially if you had a problem with supply with your first baby?
 - Is it ok to take antihistamines for allergies while you're breastfeeding? How will that affect my milk supply?
 - What herbs increase milk supply, but should be AVOIDED, and why.
 - My period has returned after giving birth and my PMS is worse than its ever been. What can I take that will help with this and that's ok to use while breastfeeding?
 - What you can do if one breast produces more than the other? How can this be corrected?
 - Why don't I get much milk when I pump, but my baby seems to be satisfied?
 - How to listen to and understand your baby's cues.

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written by Pam Caldwell

Certified Herbalist --- Fertility, Pregnancy, Birth, Postpartum & Lactation Specialist

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