



Created Mar 14, 2023

Breastfeeding and Herbal Supplements

Herbs in Breastfeeding

There is very limited data on the use of herbs in increasing breastmilk supply. There are not enough studies to determine the safety and efficacy of herbs. There are no regulated guidelines or scientific studies done to support the use of herbs during breastfeeding. Anecdotally many people find they do have an increase in supply if using certain herbal supplements. Most often herbal remedies are discussed and passed down through families and cultures.

Common Herbs Discussed to Assist Milk Supply

➤ Fenugreek - 3 tablets 3x a day

- a common herb in India and the middle east. FDA lists this as safe although it has not been studied in breastfeeding women. This herb gives the person taking it a sweet smell on their skin/ sweat.
- Breastfeeding parents tend to see an increase in supply in 1-2 days if taking as directed on the bottle. Dosage is not regulated so some may have more or less of the herb than recommended.
- diarrhea and abdominal discomfort have been noted when taking this, this also lowers blood sugars so caution should be used if the breastfeeding parent is diabetic. If there is a legume or peanut allergy be cautious taking this.

➤ Blessed Thistle- 3 tablets 3x a day

- This works well along with fenugreek- advised to take them together
- The dosage is the same as fenugreek, this is also not regulated so take according to package directions.

➤ Goats Rue-

- Comes in capsules- take as directed on bottle, or as leaves that can be made into tea 2x a day
- can be extra helpful with milk supply if there are hormonal issues like PCOS
- also may lower blood sugar so caution if diabetic

➤ Moringa- up to 4.5 gr a day

- take as directed on bottle- comes in capsules and powder
- used often in the Philippines to increase milk supply but this is not scientifically proven
- high in protein and vitamin C and Calcium
- also may lower blood sugar so caution if diabetic

➤ Shavatari- 1 or 2 - 500 mg tablets 2x a day

- comes in capsules and powder that can be stirred into warm milk
- traditionally from China and India
- also may lower blood sugar

Some countries also depend on garlic, ginger, oatmeal, alfalfa, caraway, anise etc, etc. There are lots of traditional soups, teas, stews that you can look up that all promote increased milk production according to cultural beliefs.

References

Up to date “Common Problems of Breastfeeding and Weaning” Jeanne Spencer, Oct 20, 2022

International Breastfeeding Centre “Herbal Remedies for Milk Supply” Dr. Jack Newman

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