

## Online pregnancy resources

Some web sites provide the opportunity to create community while connecting with other pregnant women and expectant families.

BC Parent on-line

[http://www.bcparent.ca/resources/health\\_services.html](http://www.bcparent.ca/resources/health_services.html)

great resources, doulas, homeopathy etc all within vancouver

Pregnancy Calendar

([www.pregnancycalendar.com](http://www.pregnancycalendar.com))

record changes to mom and fetus over time

BabyZone

([www.babyzone.com](http://www.babyzone.com))

research stages of prenancy, dietary information etc.

La Leche League International

([www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org))

Midwifery Today

([www.midwifery.com](http://www.midwifery.com))

breastfeeding information and much more

## Recommended reading for pregnancy yoga

Janet Balaskas	Preparing for Birth with Yoga Active Birth Natural Pregnancy
Joseph Chilton Pearce	Magical Child
Ina May Gaskin	Spiritual Midwifery
Geeta Iyengar	Yoga, A Gem for Women
Carl Jones	Mind Over Labour Sharing Birth, A Father's Guide
Sandra Jordon	Yoga for Pregnancy
Sheila Kitzinger	The Experience of Childbirth The Complete Book of Pregnancy and Childbirth
Frederick Leboyer	Birth Without Violence
Jean Liedloff	The Continuum Concept
Sylvia Klein Olkin	Positive Pregnancy Fitness
Elizabeth Noble	Essential Exercises for the Childbearing Year
Michel Odent	Birth Reborn
Vimala McClure	Infant Massage
Gayle Peterson	Birthing Normally
Penny Simkin	The Birth Partner Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn

## Vancouver resources for pregnant women

Prenatal Yoga & Couples Yoga for Birth Preparation	Janice Clarfield	739-6664
Naturopathic Physician (pregnancy & newborns)		738-1012
Integrated Healing Arts (Dr Eric Posen, Dr Chan)		688-1500
Chiropractor (pregnancy & newborns)	Dr Stephanie Gaston DC	562-8434
Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine	Dr. Kathe Faraci (Renuka) Dr Keema Shield R.AC	764-8433
Midwifery Care	Midwifery Care Northshore	922-6960
	Midwifery Group	877-7766
	Midwifery Practice at BC Women's Hospital	875-3095
	Pacific Midwifery Practice	874-7999
	Birth Attendant - Gloria Lemay	gloria@glorialemay.com
Doula (a woman providing physical, emotional & informational support)	Katie Baker	715-2834
Le Leche Leader	Monique Le Blanc	990-9686
Prenatal Counselling	Kirstin Wolff	644-3956
BC Assoc. for Labour Support		527-5045
Prenatal Childbirth Education	Heather Martin	250-653-9129
	BC Women's Hospital	875-2169
	Douglas College Prenatal	527-5476
	Greater Vancouver Childbirth Ed Assoc	537-9968
	Lower Mainland Childbearing Society	882-9192
	St Paul's Hospital	631-5298
Massage, Aromatherapy & Baby Massage	Bloom Wellness Center	988-1411
Physiotherapy and Crainialsacral Therapy	Northshore Wellness	980-4538
Shiatsu Massage	Joe Barnwell	649-1126
Nausea & Vomiting Helpline	(information & counselling)	1-800-439-8477
Pacific Postpartum Support Society	(for depression & anxiety)	255-7999
Family Physicians specializing in maternity	Dr. Lori McFarlane	879-3900
	Dr Grant Ayling	732-8696
	Dr Karen Buhler	874-0261
	Dr Joan Donner	739-0311
	Dr Kathy Greenberg	875-2160
	Dr Sue Harris	875-2029
	Dr Georgia Immega	733-4105
	Dr Sarah Ostler	739-0311
	Dr Nardia Strydom	874-0261
	Dr Marjorie Zaps-Gilje	739-0311
For vitamins, herbs, essential oils and natural pharmaceuticals		
Nutraways -1320 Lonsdale Ave		985-3214
Mother's Herbs - 117 East 14th St.		988-4372
Gaia Garden Herbal Apothecary - 2672 West Broadway		734-4372
Semperviva Natural Pahrmary & Aromatherapy - 2608 West Broadway		739-1958
Hathor Body (balancing bath & body oil) - hathorbody.com		904-5611

# Herbs for pregnancy and childbirth

Ideally you will have entered pregnancy in good general health and won't have any major health problems during the term. However, it is almost inevitable that you will have some minor health issues to deal with, if only those of a normal pregnancy. It is preferred that you do not take any medications during the pregnancy, or afterwards if you are breast feeding, but, of course, you should not discontinue any prescribed remedy or drug without consulting your health practitioner. The information given below is intended as a guideline only, and does not replace the advice of a health care professional.

## FIRST TRIMESTER

Nausea and vomiting are very common in the first 3 months as your body goes through all sorts of hormonal adjustments. It is usually worse in the morning and may be associated with low blood sugar. Certainly many women find that eating some bland carbohydrate, especially crackers or arrowroot biscuits seems to help. Protein may also be low and a soya, nut or goats milk drink before rising may also help. Throughout the day try to avoid low blood sugar by eating 4 or 5 small meals instead of 2 or 3 large ones, and be sure to drink plenty of fluids.

Chamomile and peppermint tea is helpful for nausea. Use a teaspoon of either or both herbs per cup of water and drink freely. You can also use Ginger as a tea. It is made with 1/2 to 1 teaspoon chopped fresh ginger per cup of water, simmered for 10 minutes, tightly covered. This can be sweetened with honey to taste. If these are not sufficient use Black Horehound. Swallowing cracked ice or plain yoghurt may alleviate actual vomiting. Slippery elm gruel made with a tablespoon of powdered stirred into a cup of water may be used a nutritive stomach settler. Use just a little water at first to make a paste then slowly add the remaining water.

Muscle cramps may be eased by taking more calcium in the diet in the form of dark green leafy vegetables, beans, grains, nuts and seaweeds. If a supplement is required use calcium citrate for maximum absorption. This should be mixed with an equal amount of magnesium as well as some zinc, vitamin D and organic phosphorus. Take 500 - 750 mg. of each at night. Regular exercise will also help.

A multivitamin and mineral formula may be useful if nausea prevents eating. Be sure to take one with adequate folic acid and pyridoxine (B6).

If constipation occurs use psyllium seed powder. 1 teaspoon stirred into a glass of water acts as a soft, demulcent, bulking laxative.

Raspberry leaf should be drunk freely throughout the pregnancy to tone and strengthen the uterus and prepare it for labour. This can be substituted with Salmonberry or Thimbleberry leaves if preferred.

## MISCARRIAGE

It is estimated that one in four pregnancies ends in miscarriage. Usually this is Nature's way of preventing unviable foetuses from progressing to term and consequently weakening the human gene pool quality. However, many miscarriages occur because the mother is unable to sustain a healthy pregnancy. Her own constitution may be weak, the dosing of the cervix inadequate or her hormone balance may be poor. At the end of the third month the placenta takes over production of oestrogen and progesterone from the corpus luteum in the ovary.

If the placenta is not quite ready then a hiatus may occur in hormone release and this may trigger a miscarriage. This is the reason why the third month is the highest risk time.

Preventing miscarriage starts pre-conception with techniques such as detoxification, diet, exercise and tonic herbs to strengthen the reproductive organs. Suitable herbs to be drunk as tonifying teas include Partridge Berry, False Unicorn, Black Cohosh, Black Haw, Motherwort and Red Raspberry. These herbs may be drunk for several months to prepare the uterus and other organs for pregnancy. Note that all of these herbs except the Raspberry should be halted as soon as pregnancy occurs.

In cases of threatened miscarriage the following herbs may be used, perhaps in a tincture form for increased potency: Wild Yam, Lady's Slipper, Ginger, True Unicorn root, Skullcap, Valerian and Black Haw.

## Second trimester

Usually this part of the pregnancy is the least difficult. The nausea passes and the overwhelming fatigue of the first three months give way to a sense of great peacefulness and well being.

A healthy diet, plenty of exercise and rest and a minimum of emotional stress will be the best medicine. It should not normally be necessary to take any herbal remedies except the standard Red Raspberry and perhaps Nettle to enrich the blood with useful nutrients.

## THIRD TRIMESTER

In the third trimester the baby really begins to grow. This is a time when the diet is critical. Because of the size of the baby the mother becomes unable to eat very much at one time. This means that meals must be small, frequent and very nourishing to support the developing child. Indigestion and heartburn become common, as well as swollen ankles and haemorrhoids from the weight of the baby.

Herbs to strengthen and tone the uterus can be introduced. Some of these are the ones used pre-conception to ready the uterus. They include: Partridge Berry, Black Cohosh, Black Haw and Skullcap.

For haemorrhoids use a rectal suppository containing cocoa butter and Horse Chestnut, Agrimony, Witch Hazel or Tormentil. Be sure to drink lots of water and consider using psyllium to soften the stool.

For indigestion and heartburn drink Chamomile, Peppermint, Lemon Balm, Lemon Grass, Ginger, Cinnamon or Cardamom.

For swollen ankles and varicose veins try to keep the feet up as much as possible. Always sit with the feet up on a stool and put bricks under the feet of the bed to raise it a couple of inches. Hydrotherapy may also be helpful for tired legs or swollen ankles. Fill 2 buckets, one with very hot water and one with cold water. Place them in the bath and, sitting on the edge of the tub, plunge your legs in first the hot for 30 seconds then the cold for a minute. Alternate between the two extremes for about 5 minutes a day. Be sure to always finish with cold. This stimulates the circulation and tones the blood vessels in the legs.

In the last month of the pregnancy you can introduce stronger more stimulating herbs which will help to promote an easy labour. These include: Motherwort, Blue Cohosh, False Unicorn and Fenugreek,

### THE LABOUR

Do not use herbs yourself to influence a delivery. This should only be done at the hands of an experienced herbalist, midwife or other primary health care practitioner.

### HYPOTONIC INERTIA

Blue Cohosh, Tansy, Southernwood, Goldenseal, Wormwood, Beth Root, Nutmeg, Myrrh, Pennyroyal, Hyssop, Rue, Fenugreek and Scotch Broom.

### HYPERTONIC ACTION

Wild yam, Cramp Bark, Black haw, valerian, Lobelia, Black Cohosh, Skullcap, Lady's Slipper, Jamaican Dogwood, Chamomile, Linden.

Essential oils may also be useful here. These should be gently massaged into the abdomen, diluted in almond oil. Suitable oils include: Rose, Rosemary, Lavender, Chamomile, Ylang ylang, Geranium and Verbena.

### CERVICAL RIGIDITY

Jamaican Dogwood, Lavender, Lobelia, Black Haw, Valerian, Blue Cohosh, Lady's Slipper. The essential oils mentioned above may also be useful.

### Excessive bleeding

Nettle, Cayenne, Shepard's Purse and Agrimony.

### PLACENTAL RETENTION

Beth Root, Dong Quai, Shepard's Purse, Wild Yam, False Unicorn root, Milk vetch, Goldenseal and Motherwort.

### POST PARTUM PAIN

Lady's Slipper, Ginger, Yarrow, Valerian, Pasque Flower, Jamaican Dogwood, Wild Yam and

Black Cohosh. For extreme pain, under professional guidance, herbs such as Aconite or Belladonna may be used, provided the mother is not breast feeding.

There are some herbal formulas which can safely be used by all new mothers, and which do not require professional guidance.

#### PERINEAL WASH

A useful treatment for any tearing during delivery and after episiotomy. It is used in the form of a sitz (hip) bath used daily. Suitable herbs could include Calendula, Amica flowers, Comfrey leaves, Plantain leaves, Goldenseal, St. John's Wort and Witch Hazel. Essential oils of Cypress and Lavender may be added to the water. Sea salt is also useful in the water as an antiseptic and to promote healing.

#### TO ENRICH AND INCREASE THE MILK SUPPLY

Borage, Goat's Rue, Fennel, Raspberry, Vervain, Alfalfa, Anise, Blessed Thistle, Melilot and Nettle.

#### To rebalance hormones and tone the reproductive organs

Partridge Berry, White Dead Nettle, Yarrow, Chaste Berry, Raspberry, False Unicorn, True Unicorn, Licorice, Sarsaparilla, Blessed Thistle and Dong Quai.

#### TO REDUCE MILK FLOW DURING WEANING

Sage, Motherwort, Yarrow, Thyme and Raspberry.

#### Post natal depression

This is a relatively common complaint, complicated by the overwhelming fatigue the new mother usually feels. It is important to determine the actual cause if possible. Factors to consider include hormonal balance, debility and constitutional depletion, nutritional inadequacies especially B vitamins and iron, stress and anxiety. Herbs which may be helpful include all the stimulating and tonic nervines: Borage, Skullcap, St. John's Wort, Lavender, Lemon Balm, Rosemary, Pasque Flower, Vervain and Oatstraw. Use Chaste Berry and False Unicorn to rebalance the hormones. Essential oils may be very helpful, in a bath or a massage. Try Jasmine, Rose, Lavender and Basil.

#### HERBS TO AVOID DURING PREGNANCY

Belladonna	Barberry	Goldenseal	Ginseng
Juniper	Sassafras	Licorice	Ephedra (Ma Huang)
Mistletoe	Bryony	Mugwort	Southernwood Myrrh
Dong Quai	Nutmeg	Pokeroot	
Oregon grape	Comfrey	Parsley	Male fern Pennyroyal
Wormwood	Rue	Feverfew	
Scotch broom	Celandine	Sweet Annie	Tansy
Thuja (Arbor vitae)	Sage		

## ESSENTIAL OILS TO AVOID DURING PREGNANCY

Cinnamon	Basil	Hyssop	Nutmeg
Myrrh	Clary sage	Savory	Sage
Thyme	Oregano	Cypress	Marjoram
Juniper	Pennyroyal	Aniseed	Fennel

The general rule is to give no herbs at all during pregnancy except Red raspberry tea. In the last 2 months herbs may be used to promote an easier birth but this should generally be done under the supervision of a practitioner.

Many herbs that cross the line between food and medicine (ie. those that specifically act to nourish and support the tissues) may in fact be safely used during pregnancy. These may include

Urtica dioica	Chamomilia recutita	T-ilia europea	Hypedcum perforatum
Althea off.	Plantago spp.	Borago off.	Avena saliva
Medicago sativa	Fucus vesiculosus	Equisetum arvensis	Melissa off,

Other herbs may be used to treat a specific health condition, but only under the supervision of a practitioner.

No herb should ever be given as an abortifacient. If an emmenagogue action is required the client should be asked to first produce printed results of a negative laboratory pregnancy test.

## THE FOLLOWING HERBS SHOULD BE AVOIDED BY WOMEN WHO ARE PREGNANT OR BREAST-FEEDING:

Bearberry ( <i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i> )	Black Cohosh ( <i>Cimicifuga racernosa</i> )
Blue Cohosh ( <i>Caulophyllum thalictroides</i> )	Broom ( <i>Cytisus scoparius</i> )
Cedar ( <i>Thuja occidentalis</i> )	Comfrey ( <i>Symphytum officinalis</i> )
Dong quai ( <i>Angelica sinensis</i> )	Golden Seal ( <i>Hydrastis canadensis</i> )
Juniper ( <i>Juniperus communis</i> )	Licorice ( <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> )
Ma Huang ( <i>Ephedra sinica</i> )	Nutmeg ( <i>Myristica fragrans</i> )
Parsley oil	Pennyroyal ( <i>Mentha pulegium</i> )
Pokeroot ( <i>Phytolacca spp.</i> )	Rue ( <i>RLda graveolens</i> )
Sage ( <i>Saivia officinalis</i> )	Tansy ( <i>Tanacetum vulgare</i> )
All strong laxative herbs	