

Herbal medication and breastfeeding

The information provided is taken from various reference sources. It is provided as a guideline. No responsibility can be taken by the author or the Breastfeeding Network for the way in which the information is used. Clinical decisions remain the responsibility of medical and breastfeeding practitioners. The data presented here is intended to provide some immediate information but cannot replace input from professionals.

We are frequently asked for information on the safety of herbal medication to be taken during breastfeeding. We are unable to comment on the safety of combination herbal products. There is rarely satisfactory literature published on the safety of a complimentary therapy in breastfeeding women. It is not ethical for us to make a recommendation based on anecdotes. Also, herbal products are not regulated and there can be significant variations in the potency and purity between different products or even between different lots of the same product. Herbs can also interact with each other and with prescription medications, so we tend to advise not taking them at all. If you do take a supplement, make sure that you're making that decision based on a clear understanding of the benefits you are likely to get. Benefits are often a lot better researched and documented than risks.

Other sources of information:

- Herbs to avoid whilst breastfeeding- https://kellymom.com/bf/gotmilk/herbs_to_avoid/
- Too much milk: Sage and other herbs for decreasing milk supply - <https://kellymom.com/bf/can-i-breastfeed/herbs/herbs-oversupply/>
- Herbs and Breastfeeding: References. <https://kellymom.com/bf/can-ibreastfeed/herbs/herbal-ref/>
- Herbal safety for nursing moms. https://kellymom.com/bf/can-ibreastfeed/herbs/herbal_safety/
- The Nursing Mother's Herbal 2003 by Shelia Humphrey. Available from Amazon £9.99

To talk to a mum who knows about breastfeeding call the National Breastfeeding Helpline 0300 100 0212

Calls to 0300 numbers cost no more than calls to UK numbers starting 01 and 02 and will be part of any inclusive minutes that apply to your provider and call package.