

Helpful Herbs for Pregnancy & Beyond

The NORA Blend –recommended loose herbs to have on hand:

- Nettles (*Urtica dioica*)
- Oatstraw (*Avena sativa*)
- Red Raspberry Leaf (*Rubus idaeus*)
- Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*)

These four herbs combined make a nourishing tea you can safely enjoy throughout your pregnancy, postpartum, menstruation, and menopause (*see 2nd page for herb benefits*).

*I recommend buying herbs in bulk and storing in an airtight container.

In pregnancy: Start with one cup per day, increasing to a full quart per day late in your third trimester. Note any side effects and discuss with your midwife.

To make an infusion: place a large handful, about one ounce of herbs to 32 ounces of water, cover with steeping hot water and infuse overnight to extract all the minerals and vitamins needed to support your mind, body, and spirit. **Strain your infusion and store in the refrigerator (up to 3 days). Drink over ice or reheat for warmth, depending on your dosha! Some enjoy adding a touch of mint or honey to lift the earthy essence of this tea.



While many herbs are safe, there are some risks associated with using certain herbs while pregnant, these include: miscarriage, premature labor and birth, or adverse effects on the fetus (Romm, 2019).

Additional herbs that are noted to be safe: Cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpan*), Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), Echinacea (*Echinacea purpurea*), Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), Garlic (*Allium sativum*), Ginger (*Zingiber officinalis*), Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*), Marshmallow Root (*Althaea officinalis*), Peppermint (*Mentha × piperita*), Rose Hips (*Rosa canina*), Slippery Elm (*Ulmus rubra*), Skullcap (*Scutellaria*)

Some herbs are safe to use but in smaller doses and for short periods to treat specific issues: Ashwanganda (*Withania somnifera*), Hops (*Humulus lupulus*), Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Uva Ursi (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)

Common herbs to avoid during pregnancy:

Aloe (*Aloe vera*) internally, Arnica (*Arnica montana*), Barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*), Blessed Thistle (*Cnicus benedictus*), Blue Cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*), Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*), Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), Cotton Root (*Gossypium herbaceum*), Dong Quai (*Angelica sinensis*), Ephedra (*Ephedra sinica*), Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*), Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium*), Goats Rue (*Galega officinalis*), Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*), Ipecac (*Ipecac ipechachuana*), Juniper Berries (*Juniperis communis*), Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Mistletoe (*Viscum album*), Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), Nutmeg (*Myristica officinalis*), Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*), Pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*), Poke root (*Phytolacca decondra*), Rhubarb (*Rheum palatum*), Sage (*Salvia officinalis*), Shepherd's Purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*), Yarrow (*Acillea millefolium*)

Quality places to order herbs online:

www.mountainroseherbs.com, www.frontiercoop.com, or www.pacificbotanicals.com

Local to NWO? Check out Claudia's Health Market, Bassett's Health Food, Wellaroma, or Axiom Lux, OHMI Midwives, or buy directly from me

Shelly is a Certified Professional Midwife, Massage Therapist, Energy Practitioner, Birth Educator, and Sonogrpaher serving the Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan area.

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References:

- Davis, E. (2012). Heart & hands a midwife's guide to pregnancy and birth. Ten Speed Press.
Gladstar, R. (2009). Rosemary Gladstar's herbal recipes for vibrant health. Storey.
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N.O.R.A Tea



Benefits of consistent consumption of the NORA tea infusions may include:

- Build iron rich blood stores
- Combat iron deficiency anemia
- Add important minerals & vitamins
- Increase your energy & strengthen your body
- Bring a shine to hair & strengthen fingernails
- Clear and firm your skin
- Restore elasticity to blood vessels
- Boost tone of your uterus
- Lower blood pressure and cholesterol
- Improve digestion & reduce swelling
- Reduce symptoms of seasonal allergies
- May help reduce your cancer risks



Why a long infusion, as opposed to a quick tea?

With infusions, you get certain nutrients out of a dried plant only available after soaking in hot water for several hours. Scientific studies have shown that it takes at least four hours for a significant amount of minerals to extract into the water, and longer (up to eight hours) for roots, which are tougher and take longer to release their medicinal constituents into the water. If you make a cup of nettle tea (1-2 teaspoons steeped in hot water for ten minutes), you would get about 5-10 mg of calcium, but if you make a cup of nettle long infusion, 1 oz. steeped in 1-quart hot water for a minimum of four hours, you will get over 200 mg of calcium per cup!! And not just the calcium, but all the nutritional co-factors necessary to effectively assimilate calcium, because calcium by itself is not well utilized by the body. Most infusions contain large quantities of calcium, magnesium and other minerals, including trace minerals, in their most absorbable form. They also contain essential fatty acids, vitamins, and protein. Each herb has individual medicinal qualities, actions, and uses (see below).

About the herbs in your NORA blend:



Nettles (*Urtica dioica*)—Rich in protein, vitamins, and minerals, especially the critical trace minerals: anti-cancer selenium, immune-enhancing sulfur, memory-enhancing zinc, diabetes-chasing chromium, and bone-building boron. A quart of nettle infusion contains more than 1000 milligrams of calcium, 15000 IU of vitamin A, 760 milligrams of vitamin K, 10% protein, and lavish amounts of most B vitamins.



Oatstraw (*Avena sativa*)—This plant is a 'nervine' and is valued for its ability to restore balance and a sense of calm in stressed-out individuals. Oatstraw has soothing and nourishing effects helpful for weakness, debility, and convalescence. Oatstraw has been used traditionally to boost mental health and as a restorative to the nervous system, antispasmodic, sedative, and nutritive tonic.



Raspberry Leaf (*Rubus idaeus*)—A mineral-rich herb, containing vitamins E, C, and B complex, calcium, iron, phosphorus, potassium, niacin, magnesium, and manganese. It contains tannins, which give a tea or infusion of raspberry leaf an astringent taste similar to black tea and astringent (toning) action on tissues in the body. Red Raspberry Leaf is a "uterine toner"—it relieves period cramping and makes the uterus work more efficiently. Myth buster: by itself, it is not helpful when attempted to be used as a labor induction tool.



Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*)—a nutritive herb with leaves as a source for the dietary supplement chlorophyll assisting in the formation of hemoglobin and red blood cells as iron building for those with pregnancy-related anemia. Alfalfa is rich in antioxidants, and nutrients like calcium, iron, potassium, phosphorus, Vitamin C and K, copper, folate, and magnesium. Alfalfa is known for its benefits of blood sugar management, as a fiber-rich food, by slowing the absorption of glucose in the intestines. When taken as a supplement, alfalfa is thought to be beneficial in treating diabetes, high cholesterol, arthritis, urinary tract infections. Alfalfa contains phytoestrogens, plant-based hormones that mimic the action of the female hormone estrogen—Alfalfa may be an effective remedy for menstrual disorders and menopause symptoms. Alfalfa is also a plant-based galactagogue, helpful in stimulating breast milk production (lactogenesis I).