



Red Raspberry Leaf in Pregnancy

For thousands of years midwives of old and Chinese herbalists have used herbs with very good results. Most of our allopathic medicines have come from herbs. A safe, commonly used herbal tonic for pregnancy is red raspberry leaf tea.

Brewed as a tea or as an infusion, red raspberry leaf is one of the safest and commonly used tonic herbs for women wanting to get pregnant or for women who are already pregnant. Red Raspberry Leaf (*Rubus idaeus*) tones the uterus, improves contractions and decreases constipation.

When to use There are two basic stances on the subject. There is agreement among many clinicians that in the 3rd trimester frequent (2- 3 cups per day of tea or 1 - 2 cups per day of infusion) is beneficial to the uterine and pelvic muscles. Red Raspberry Leaf contains many minerals and vitamins, including vitamin C and calcium. It also contains an alkaloid called fragrine, which lends tone to the uterus.

The more radical stance is that drinking one cup of tea per day in the 1st trimester and 2 cups in the 2nd trimester and switching to the infusion in the 3rd trimester ensures a strong uterus, is good for you nutritionally and prevents miscarriage. Some say it is advised to not use it in the first trimester, particularly if you have a history of miscarriage.

The more conservative stance is that red raspberry leaf can cause minor spotting in the beginning of a pregnancy, and some U.K. midwives claim an increase in miscarriage rates. Contact your midwife, herbalist or physician for more information. If you're thinking about using it, to be safe, just wait until you're 36 weeks along.

What does Red Raspberry Leaf Do? Red Raspberry leaf does not start labour or promote contractions. It is NOT an emmenagogue or oxytocic herb. What it does is help strengthen the pelvic and uterine muscles so that once labour does start the muscles will be more efficient.

Tea recipe To make a tea, pour 1 cup boiling water over 2 teaspoons of herb and steep for ten minutes. Strain. During the first two trimesters, drink 1 cup per day. During the final trimester, drink 2-3 cups per day.

You can harvest your own red raspberry leaves or can purchase them dried in bulk from your local health food store or organic grocery.

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