

Red Raspberry Leaf Tea

Red Raspberry leaf tea 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. Most tonics need to be used regularly, for a tonic is to the cells much like exercise is to the muscles; not much help when done irregularly. But you will still benefit even from occasional use of tonics during pregnancy, since they contain nourishing factors. The herb comes in forms of leaves to make teas or tonics as well as pill like capsules you can swallow.

Most of the benefits given to regular use of Raspberry leaf tea throughout pregnancy can be traced to the strengthening power of frangin, an alkaloid which gives tone to the muscles of the pelvic region, including the uterus itself; and to the nourishing power of the vitamins and minerals found in this plant. There is rich concentration of Vitamin C, the presence of Vitamin E and the easily assimilated calcium and iron. Raspberry leaves also contain vitamins A and B complex and many minerals, including phosphorus and potassium.

When to use: There are two basic points of view 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.

The more radical point of view 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. If a mother is prone to miscarriages she may feel safer avoiding raspberry until the third trimester. This is an herb with centuries of safe use behind it, there is usually little cause for concern, but check with your healthcare provider before using.

According to Susun Weed, author of "Wise Woman, Herbal for the Childbearing Years," the benefits listed below for drinking a Raspberry leaf brew before and throughout pregnancy are as follows:

- Increasing fertility in both men and women. Red Raspberry leaf is an excellent fertility herb when combined with Red Clover.
 - Preventing miscarriage and hemorrhage. Raspberry leaf tones the uterus and helps prevent miscarriage and postpartum hemorrhage from a relaxed or atonic uterus.
 - Use raspberry leaf infusion to help facilitate placenta delivery. Chips of frozen raspberry leaf infusion sucked throughout labor help keep the uterus working strongly and smoothly.
 - Easing of morning sickness. Many women attest to raspberry leaves' gentle relief of nausea and stomach distress throughout pregnancy. Drink a cup or two of raspberry leaf tea or infusion each day. Sipping the infusion before getting up or sucking on ice cubes made from the infusion increases the strength of this remedy.

- Reducing pain during labor and after birth. By toning the muscles used during labor and birth, Raspberry leaf eliminates many of the reasons for a painful birth and prolonged recovery. It does not counter the pain of dilation of the cervix.

Red Raspberry Leaves do not start or encourage labor. It can help the contractions to be productive once true labor has begun because it strengthens the uterine and pelvic muscles but *it is not an oxytonic herb (one that would induce labor)*. That being said, it's important to talk with your midwife, obstetrician or herbalist before beginning drinking red raspberry leaf tea or taking a supplement. Some will recommend you wait until you are 36 weeks along before incorporating the tea into your health regime while others may encourage you to begin right away. Each situation and pregnancy is different so it's best to get other's opinions before beginning red raspberry

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.

Excerpts from Weed, Susun. "Wise Woman Herbal for the Childbearing Years."

<http://www.motherandchildhealth.com/Prenatal/raspberry.html>