

Fertility Herbal Tonic: Red Raspberry Leaf

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Red Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*, spp) is one of the most well known and most loved fruits in the world, but in the herbal and midwifery world its leaves are also a dearly treasured herbal remedy for women of childbearing age. Raspberry Leaf is most popular as a tonic for pregnancy and labor, but it is also excellent as a nutritive and tonic in preparation for pregnancy. It is one of the main herbs that is considered safe (in most cases) to use during pregnancy in preparation for labor. But why wait until you are pregnant to reap the benefits of this wonderful leaf?

Raspberry leaves are high in carotenoids, citric acid, tannins, vitamin A, B complex, C, and E. They also have an easily assimilated form of iron, calcium, phosphorus, potassium and silica.

Raspberry leaf's main medicinal actions: astringent, tonic, parturient, refrigerant and antiemetic. Below is a break-down to help you understand what these medicinal actions mean in relationship to this plant.

Astringent: Astringent herbs cause contraction and shrinkage of internal and external body tissues. They also help to prevent hemorrhage or excessive bleeding. Red Raspberry leaves help prevent hemorrhage, making it useful for miscarriage, childbirth, postpartum healing, endometriosis, uterine fibroids and endometrial hyperplasia. The tannins contribute to its astringent properties which also aid healthy digestive function; this herb is wonderful for alleviating diarrhea.

Uterine Tonic: Its constituent fragrine is an alkaloid that helps to tone the muscles of the pelvic region, including the uterus. This is a wonderful action for improving uterine health where there is uterine weakness present. This may help prevent miscarriage due to uterine weakness, when used in preparation for pregnancy.

Parturient: Parturient herbs promote labor. A recent study showed that 63% of midwives in the United States use this herb to stimulate labor. Although it is used quite commonly by midwives to stimulate labor, it is used more often to prepare the woman's uterus for the hard work of labor.

Cooling: Raspberry leaf cools the body down and may help to slightly reduce fever. Note: this action only takes place if there is an actual fever present.

Antiemetic: It may reduce morning sickness by easing nausea and helping to prevent vomiting.

“Raspberry leaf works to encourage the uterus to let go and function without tension.”- Susun S. Weed, Author of Wise Woman Herbal For The Childbearing Year.

Red Raspberry for Fertility Issues

This herb may be helpful for the following conditions where there is menstrual bleeding issues or uterine weakness present. It would be best to use this plant to help heal and prepare for pregnancy for at least 3 months prior to trying to conceive.

Recurrent Miscarriage*: For those who have experienced miscarriage due to uterine weakness.

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Heavy Menstrual Bleeding: The astringent properties of this herb help to stop heavy bleeding. It is also high in iron which may help prevent anemia due to heavy menstrual bleeding.

Poor Egg Quality/Nutritional Deficiency: This herb is very nutritive which helps to boost overall nutrition in preparation for pregnancy. Having adequate nutrient stores prior to pregnancy can help increase your chances of a healthy pregnancy.

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General Preparation for Pregnancy: If you are thinking of trying to get pregnant this herb may be a great ally for preparing your uterus and boosting overall nutritional intake. It is also safe for men to use to boost their nutrition levels in preparation for conception, as it does not contain any hormone-like substances.

Uterine Trauma: If you have had surgery to remove fibroids, endometriosis, ovarian cysts or have had uterine prolapse, previous uterine hemorrhage or a Cesarean section this herb may help your recovery and healing of the uterus. The toning effect of Red Raspberry leaf helps the uterus to recover more quickly.

Traditional Usage of Red Raspberry Leaf

This herb is best taken as an infusion (herbal tea). Drink 1 cup, 1-3 times a day. Pour ¼ cup of dried red raspberry leaf into a quart mason jar, fill with freshly boiled water, cover and let steep for at least 15-30 minutes. For a stronger infusion, steep for 3-4 hours.

Red Raspberry leaf is also sold as a tincture (liquid drops) and tablets. Please follow the manufacturer's recommended dosage for the product you have purchased. It has been shown extremely safe to consume everyday in preparation for pregnancy as well as throughout pregnancy to prepare for labor and birth.

***Slight Caution: The following information is based on my personal experiences as a practitioner. In a couple of clients I have worked with, with a history of recurrent miscarriage due to an "irritable" or "weak" uterus, I suggest that it may be best to use red raspberry for pregnancy preparation (3-6 months prior to trying to conceive) and avoided during the first trimester of pregnancy. The effect of this herb on the uterus appears to be too much for some women. It is fine to start drinking it again in the 2nd trimester, once pregnancy is established.**

Simple At Home Infusion Preparations

Red Raspberry leaves have a mild flavor as opposed to other herbal teas, and they combine well with other herbs. All herbs below should be purchased dried rather than fresh.

Nutritive Pregnancy Preparation Tonic

This tea is a wonderful mild uterine tonic, digestive tonic and gently supports liver health.

2 part Red Raspberry leaves
1 part Nettles
1 part Dandelion Leaf
½ part Oatstraw
½ part Peppermint

Super Yummy C

This infusion is high in Vit. C has a beautiful pink color and is delicious. Steep this tea for at least 30 minutes; rose hips take longer to steep.

1 part Red Raspberry leaves
1 part Rose Hips
¼ part Hibiscus flower

Super Green

This is an easy way to get a daily dose of greens! Steep this tea for 3-4 hours before drinking.

2 parts Red Raspberry Leaf
1 part Nettles
1 part Alfalfa leaf
½ part Parsley leaf
½ part Dandelion leaf
½ part Peppermint or Spearmint

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