

Herbal Infusions and their benefits and properties

Nettle leaf and Stem (*Urtica dioica*):

- **Properties** - Contains 1000 mg of calcium, every mineral required by the body including the all important folic acid, chlorophyll, protein, antioxidants, carotenes, linoleic/formic/linolenic acid, Vitamin E, glucoquinones, and phytosterols.
- **Benefits** include improving the blood's ability to carry iron, helps to stabilize blood sugar, regulates weight, reduces fatigue, improves stamina, increases vitamin K in the blood, improves thyroid function, and restores proper adrenal function.

Comfrey Leaf (*Symphytum uplandica*):

- **Properties** - Contains many rich minerals, vitamins, proteins, and a substance called allantoin (Allantoin helps restore elasticity within the tissues of the body).
- **Benefits** include allowing better flexibility of the pelvic bones , strengthening the uterine muscles, perineal tissue, uterine ligaments, bladder and vagina. Allantoin helps restore elasticity within the tissues of the body. Comfrey leaf helps prevent complications such as pre-eclampsia and anemia.

Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*):

- **Properties** - Contains proteins, iron, B vitamins, chromium, and phytoestrogens.
- **Benefits** include increasing energy, normalizing thyroid function, nourishing mucous membranes, relieving cystitis, calming the nerves, strengthening the immune system and preventing cancer.
- ***As a note of caution:** overuse of Red Clover can thin the blood and should therefore be limited to drinking a quart once or twice a week to prevent increased risk of hemorrhage.

Oatstraw (*Avina sativa*):

- **Properties** - Contains calcium, minerals, vitamins, steroidal saponins (which nourish the pancreas, liver and adrenals).
- **Benefits** include increasing elasticity of the blood vessels, reducing hemorrhoids and varicose veins; strengthens the tissues of the bladder, urethra and vagina.

Raspberry Leaf and Stem (*Rubus species*):

- Properties - Contains rich minerals including phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and iron; vitamins A, B, C, and E.
- Benefits include toning the muscles of the uterus (reduces the intensity of sensations during labor and postpartum), helps prevent miscarriage, helps prevent hemorrhage, facilitates placental release.
- *Caution – Some herbalists do not recommend using Raspberry Leaf in the first trimester to prevent early miscarriage.

Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*):

- Properties - Contains Folic acid, carotenes, calcium, iron, phosphorus, potassium, vitamin B1 (Thiamin), vitamin B2 (Riboflavin), and vitamin B6 (pyridoxine).
- Benefits include increasing the body temperature (helps with the common cold), increase in energy, improved immune system, healthier skin, improved strength and flexibility of bones, strengthening of the nerves, easing of emotions, decreased flatulence, decrease in cancer, and (as most of us know) soothes the stomach.
- *Caution: This should be brewed as a mild tea and mixed in with any infusion you wish for flavor and NOT made up as an infusion.

Additional hints for using infusions:

Nettle is the first choice for it's incredible benefits for pregnant women (and everyone else as well). It is a very rich infusion, and is very dark green. When you first try it you may find it too strong. Please try to adjust. When I first began drinking it I would ice it, water it down and sweeten with honey or stevia. After the first few times it just tastes like rich tea.

Raspberry is a close second in it's benefits for pregnancy and women in general. This herb is very high in tannins. This means it is very strong tasting. This tea can be brewed together with nettle to improve the flavor and meld the flavors.

Oatstraw can smell a bit grassy when brewing but it has a nice flavor and tastes like sun tea.

Think of infusions as a health beverage, a beauty treatment (shining hair, lovely skin, sparkling eyes, well rested appearance), and an insurance plan for having the healthiest pregnancy possible, giving your baby the best start, and easing both of your transitions into your new life as a breastfeeding mother/baby dyad.

Determine to make this "superfood" the beverage of choice each and every day.