



# Herbs and Supplements

<http://www.pedsalex.com/breastfeeding.php>

While herbs and supplements may sound appealing because of their “natural” qualities, **some have drug-like effects that are dangerous**. Although herbal supplements are legalized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), they are **not regulated as drugs or food**, rather as “dietary supplements”. This means that there is no guarantee that certain supplements are safe for anyone to use.

The United States National Library of Medicine provides a public portal for information about ingredients in more than 6,000 supplements. The Database can be searched by brand names, uses noted on product labels, specific active ingredients, and manufacturers. See below.

**[Click here for the Dietary Supplements Labels Database](#)**

**[Click here for the FDA approved list of substances Generally Recognized as Safe \(GRAS\)](#)**

## Fenugreek

Fenugreek is an herb containing phytoestrogens, a chemical similar to the estrogen in women. It is believed to be an excellent galactagogue, and has been used to augment mothers’ milk supply for centuries. It can be used both short-term to bolster current milk supply or long-term to maintain desired yield. As with most medication and supplements, compliance to the suggested regimen is imperative for effectiveness. Dosages less than 3500 mg/day produced no effect in many women. Below is a proposed dosing schedule for greatest effectiveness:

Form	Dosage	Frequency
Capsule	500 – 610 mg	1200-2400 mg, 3 times daily
Powder or Seeds	½ - 1 tsp; can be mixed with water or juice	3 times daily
Tincture	1 – 2 mL	3 times daily
Tea	1 cup of tea	3 times daily

Please use caution and check with your doctor if you have a history of peanut or chickpea allergies, diabetes or hypoglycemia, or asthma. Also, to check for specific drug interaction, **[click here](#)**.

## Prenatal Vitamins

It is a good idea to continue taking prenatal vitamins for as long as you are breastfeeding. This recommendation is more important for mother than for baby. Pregnancy, the birthing process, and postnatal period, all have the potential to deplete a mother’s reserve of her essential vitamins and minerals. Because prenatal vitamins contain more folic acid, calcium, and iron than do standard multivitamins, they are an easy way to ensure adequate intake.