

Herbs to Avoid in Pregnancy ^{1,2,3,4,5,6}

Common Name	Scientific Name	Reason
Aloe	<i>Aloe</i> spp., Asphodelaceae	Laxative
Anemone, pulsatilla	<i>Anemone</i> spp., Ranunculaceae	Toxic
Angelica	<i>Angelica archangelica</i> and all <i>Angelica</i> species, Apiaceae	Uterine stimulant
Arnica	<i>Arnica</i> spp., Asteraceae	Bioactive (homeopathic is fine)
Ashwagandha	<i>Withania somnifera</i> , Solanaceae	Bioactive, uterine stimulant
Barberry	<i>Berberis vulgaris</i> , Berberidaceae	Bioactive
Basil (medicinal doses)	<i>Ocimum basilicum</i> , Lamiaceae	Uterine stimulant, modest culinary use is fine
Bee balm	<i>Monarda didyma</i> and all <i>Monarda</i> species, Lamiaceae	Uterine stimulant
Beth root, birthroot	<i>Trillium erectum</i> and other <i>Trillium</i> species, Melanthiaceae	Uterine stimulant, hormonal
Black cohosh*	<i>Actaea racemosa</i> , Ranunculaceae	Uterine stimulant, bioactive, hormonal
Black walnut	<i>Juglans nigra</i> , Juglandaceae	Toxic
Blessed thistle	<i>Cnicus benedictus</i> , Asteraceae	Uterine stimulant
Bloodroot	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i> , Papaveraceae	Toxic
Blue cohosh	<i>Caulophyllum thalictroides</i> , Berberidaceae	Uterine stimulant, toxic
Blue flag	<i>Iris versicolor</i> , <i>I. virginica</i> , Iridaceae	Bioactive
Boneset	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i> , Asteraceae	PAs (possible), bioactive
Borage	<i>Borago officinalis</i> , Boraginaceae	PAs
Buchu	<i>Agathosma betulina</i> , Rutaceae	Bioactive
Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus</i> spp., Rhamnaceae	Laxative, bioactive
Butterbur	<i>Petasites</i> spp., Asteraceae	PAs
Calamus, sweet flag	<i>Acorus calamus</i> , Acoraceae	Bioactive

Calendula	<i>Calendula officinalis</i> , Asteraceae	Uterine stimulant
California poppy	<i>Eschscholzia californica</i> , Papaveraceae	Bioactive
Cascara sagrada	<i>Rhamnus purshiana</i> , Rhamnaceae	Laxative, bioactive
Celery seed	<i>Apium graveolens</i> , Apiaceae	Bioactive, uterine stimulant
Cinnamon (in larger doses)	<i>Cinnamomum verum</i> , <i>C. aromaticum</i> , <i>C. cassia</i> , Lauraceae	Bioactive
Coleus	<i>Plectranthus barbatus</i> , also known as <i>Coleus forskohlii</i> , Lamiaceae	Bioactive, uterine stimulant
Coltsfoot	<i>Tussilago farfara</i> and <i>Petasites</i> spp., Asteraceae	PAs
Comfrey, all varieties	<i>Symphytum</i> spp., Boraginaceae	PAs
Cotton root bark*	<i>Gossypium hirsutum</i> , Malvaceae	Uterine stimulant, hormonal
Damiana	<i>Turnera diffusa</i> , Turneraceae	Bioactive
Digitalis, foxglove	<i>Digitalis</i> spp., Plantaginaceae	Toxic
Dong quai	<i>Angelica sinensis</i> , Apiaceae	Uterine stimulant, hormonal
Elecampane	<i>Inula helenium</i> , Asteraceae	Bioactive
Ephedra, ma huang	<i>Ephedra sinica</i> , Ephedraceae	Bioactive
Eucalyptus	<i>Eucalyptus</i> spp., Myrtaceae	Bioactive
Fenugreek	<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i> , Fabaceae	Hormonal
Feverfew	<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i> , Asteraceae	Uterine stimulant
Frankincense	<i>Boswellia serrata</i> , <i>B. sacra</i> , Burseraceae	Bioactive
Ginger (high doses)	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> , Zingiberaceae	Bioactive; culinary or small doses are fine
Ginkgo	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i> , Ginkgoaceae	Bioactive
Ginseng, American and Asian	<i>Panax quinquefolius</i> , and <i>Panax ginseng</i> , respectively, Araliaceae	Bioactive
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago</i> spp., Asteraceae	Bioactive
Goldenseal	<i>Hydrastis canadensis</i> , Ranunculaceae	Uterine stimulant

Gotu kola	<i>Centella asiatica</i> , Apiaceae	Bioactive
Gravel root, Joe pye weed	<i>Eutrochium purpureum</i> and <i>E. maculatum</i> (formerly <i>Eupatorium maculatum</i> , <i>E. purpureum</i>), Asteraceae	Potential PAs
Grindelia, or Rosinweed	<i>Grindelia</i> spp., Asteraceae	Bioactive
Hops	<i>Humulus lupulus</i> , Cannabaceae	Hormonal, uterine stimulant
Horehound	<i>Marrubium vulgare</i> , Lamiaceae	Bioactive
Horse chestnut, conker tree	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i> , and other species, Sapindaceae	Bioactive
Horsetail	<i>Equisetum hyemale</i> , <i>Equisetum arvense</i> , Equisetaceae	Bioactive
Hyssop	<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i> , Lamiaceae	Bioactive
Japanese Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera japonica</i> , Caprifoliaceae	Bioactive
Juniper berries	<i>Juniperus</i> spp., Cupressaceae	Bioactive
Kava kava	<i>Piper methysticum</i> , Piperaceae	Bioactive
Lady's mantle	<i>Alchemilla</i> spp., Rosaceae	Hormonal, uterine stimulant
Lemongrass	<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i> , Poaceae	Bioactive
Licorice root, liquorice	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> , <i>G. uralensis</i> , Fabaceae	Hormonal, bioactive
Liferoot, ragwort	<i>Packera aurea</i> , formerly <i>Senecio aureus</i> , and other <i>Senecio</i> species, Asteraceae	PAs
Lily of the valley	<i>Convallaria majalis</i> , Asparagaceae	Toxic
Lobelia	<i>Lobelia inflata</i> , Campanulaceae	Bioactive
Lomatium, biscuit root	<i>Lomatium</i> spp., Apiaceae	Bioactive
Mimosa	<i>Albizia julibrissin</i> , Fabaceae	Bioactive
Mistletoe	<i>Viscum</i> spp., Santalaceae	Toxic
Motherwort*	<i>Leonurus cardiaca</i> , Lamiaceae	Uterine stimulant
Mugwort, wormwood	<i>Artemisia absinthium</i> , <i>A. vulgaris</i> , and other species, Asteraceae	Uterine stimulant, bioactive
Myrrh resin	<i>Commiphora myrrha</i> , <i>C. molmol</i> , <i>C. wrightii</i> , Burseraceae	Bioactive

Oregon grape root	<i>Mahonia</i> spp., Berberidaceae	Bioactive
Osha	<i>Ligusticum</i> spp., Apiaceae	Bioactive, uterine stimulant
Parsley (in large doses)	<i>Petroselinum crispum</i> , Apiaceae	Uterine stimulant
Pennyroyal	<i>Hedeoma pulegioides</i> and <i>Mentha pulegium</i> , Lamiaceae	Uterine stimulant, toxic
Peony	<i>Paeonia</i> spp., Paeoniaceae	Hormonal
Periwinkle	<i>Vinca</i> spp., Apocynaceae	Bioactive
Pine	<i>Pinus</i> spp., Pinaceae	Bioactive
Pleurisy root	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> , Apocynaceae	Bioactive
Poke root	<i>Phytolacca</i> spp., Phytolaccaceae	Toxic
Prickly ash, toothache tree	<i>Zanthoxylum</i> spp., Rutaceae	Bioactive
Rosemary (high doses)	<i>Salvia rosmarinus</i> , Lamiaceae	Bioactive; culinary use is fine
Rue	<i>Ruta graveolens</i> , Rutaceae	Toxic, uterine stimulant
Sage (in larger doses)	<i>Salvia officinalis</i> , Lamiaceae	Uterine stimulant
Sarsaparilla	<i>Smilax</i> spp., Smilacaceae	Hormonal
Sassafras	<i>Sassafras albidum</i> , Lauraceae	Bioactive
Senna	<i>Senna alexandrina</i> , Fabaceae	Laxative
Spikenard	<i>Aralia racemosa</i> , <i>A. californica</i> , Araliaceae	Bioactive
Stillingia	<i>Stillingia sylvatica</i> , Euphorbiaceae	Bioactive
Tansy	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i> , Asteraceae	Toxic
Thuja	<i>Thuja</i> spp., Cupressaceae	Toxic
Thyme (in large doses)	<i>Thymus</i> spp., Lamiaceae	Bioactive
Tulsi, holy basil	<i>Ocimum tenuiflorum</i> , Lamiaceae	Uterine stimulant
Turkey rhubarb	<i>Rheum palmatum</i> and several other <i>Rheum</i> species, Polygonaceae	Laxative

Turmeric (high doses)	<i>Curcuma longa</i> , Zingiberaceae	Bioactive; culinary use is fine
Uva ursi	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i> , Ericaceae	Bioactive
Vervain	<i>Verbena officinalis</i> , <i>V. hastata</i> , Verbenaceae	Uterine stimulant, bioactive
Vitex, or chaste tree	<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i> , Lamiaceae	Hormonal (used in pregnancy with expert guidance)
Wild bergamot	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i> and all <i>Monarda</i> species, Lamiaceae	Uterine stimulant
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i> , <i>Prunus virginiana</i> , Rosaceae	Bioactive
Wild ginger	<i>Asarum</i> spp., Aristolochiaceae	Toxic
Wild indigo	<i>Baptisia tinctoria</i> , Fabaceae	Bioactive
Wormwood	<i>Artemisia absinthium</i> , Asteraceae	Bioactive; emmenagogue
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i> , Asteraceae	Uterine stimulant
Yellow dock root (in high doses; considered safe in lower doses for both pregnancy and chestfeeding/breastfeeding/nursing)	<i>Rumex crispus</i> , <i>R. obtusifolius</i> , Polygonaceae	Laxative

* Herbs that are used in the last week of pregnancy or to stimulate labor.

References

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