

***Herzl Family Practice Centre, Goldfarb Breastfeeding Clinic***

**Herbs to increase milk supply  
Patient Handout**

Many herbs and natural products have been used in various cultures, over the years, to increase breastmilk supply. Below are some herbs that may increase milk production. However, we recommend you consult a naturopath and/or other health care professional before taking these products. **Caution must be taken as herbs can cause side effects and interact with other pills. Some are contraindicated in pregnancy.**

**Fenugreek seed (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*):**

- Dose: 1500 to 1800 mg in capsule form 3 times a day with food, or
  - 2 ml/day of 1:1 liquid extract, 2-5 ml/day of 1:2 extract, or 10 ml/day of 1:5 extract, or
  - 2-3 grams/day of dried, powdered seed.
- You may experience a maple-like or curry odour in your sweat, urine, and breastmilk. This means that the herb has reached an effective level in your body.
- May cause diarrhea; take with caution if you have asthma, thyroid disease, or diabetes on hypoglycaemic medication (pills, insulin). Do not take with blood-thinning agents such as aspirin or warfarin (coumadin). Do not take if allergic to peanuts or legumes.

**Blessed Thistle (*Cnicus benedictus*):**

- Dose: 900 to 1100 mg in capsule form 3 times a day with food
- Usually used to help fenugreek work.

**Milk thistle (*Cardui mariae herba*):**

- Dose: 200-600 mg/day in capsule form of concentrated extract, or
  - 4-10 ml/day of 1:1 liquid extract
- Stimulates prolactin secretion and milk production
- To avoid if allergic to artichoke, kiwi, daisy or ambrosia, or if taking blood-thinning agents such as aspirin or warfarin (coumadin)

**Fennel (*Foeniculi fructus*):**

- Dose: Raw or cooked in bulb form
  - 3-6 ml/day of 1:2 liquid extract or 7-14 ml/day of 1:5 extract, or
  - 1-2 grams/day in powder or capsule form
- Can optimise glandular tissue, increase prolactin and favor milk ejection
- To avoid if allergic to carrots or parsnip, or if taking blood-thinning agents such as aspirin or warfarin (coumadin)

**Alfalfa** (*Medicago sativa*):

- Dose: Up to 60 g a day (1-2 capsules 4 times a day)
- May cause diarrhea
- Caution with history of Lupus and avoid if taking blood-thinning agents such as aspirin or warfarin (coumadin)

**Brewer's Yeast** (*Saccharomyces cerevisiae*):

- Dose: 3 tablespoons a day in powder form
- May lower blood sugar levels; contraindicated in Crohn's disease; may interact with certain narcotic medications (meperidine) and antidepressants (MAOIs).

**Moringa** (*Moringa oleifera*):

- Dose: 3-9 grams/day in capsule or powder form, or
  - 3-6 ml/d of liquid extract.
- Can increase prolactin levels and glandular breast tissue
- May decrease blood sugar; to use with caution if diabetic or on oral hypoglycemic medication
- To avoid if taking blood-thinning agents such as aspirin or warfarin (coumadin)

**Goat's Rue** (*Galega officinalis*):

- Dose: 1-4 capsules a day, or
  - 3-6 ml/day of 1:1 liquid extract, 4-8 ml/day of 1:2 extract, or 6-12 ml/day of 1:10 extract
  - 3-6 grams/day if dried.
- Useful in Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) insufficient glandular tissue.
- Can lower blood sugar levels and make you urinate more often; take with caution if taking other medications for diabetes.
- To avoid if taking blood-thinning agents such as aspirin or warfarin (coumadin)

**Shatavari** (*Asparagus racemosus*):

- Dose: 3-6 grams/day in powder form, or
  - 4-9 ml/day of liquid extract.
- Stimulates mammary gland
- May be difficult to absorb in people with fat absorption difficulties

You can find these products at most natural health product stores and many pharmacies. They may work well when taken together, and/or with domperidone. Please consult with a naturopath, herbalist or your lactation consultant for more information.

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